

UTSA Libraries



1 0000 00060475 9

# YANKEE ENCHANTMENTS

*Charles Battell Loomis*



1870  
1871  
1872

Y A N K E E  
E N C H A N T -  
M E N T S





# YANKEE ENCHANT- MENTS

by CHARLES  
BATTELL LOOMIS

Pic-  
tures  
by  
F. Y.  
CORY



NEW YORK: McCLURE  
PHILLIPS & CO. M C M

COPYRIGHT, 1900  
BY MCCLURE, PHILLIPS & CO.

**LIBRARY**  
**The University of Texas**  
**At San Antonio**

TO MY CHILDREN,  
*BATTELL, ALFRED AND EDITH*



# P R E F A C E

*Dear Children :*

**D**O you think you can stand twenty stories in a bunch? Wouldn't you better take them one at a time? I did not write them all at once, so why should you read them all at once?

I have tried to make them as true as possible. I will not vouch for all the incidents, but the children are as true as I could make them.

I dare say that there are some of you who are too old for fairy stories, and if that is the case I know you will pity me who have been reading them for thirty years and still want more.

But even though you may have passed beyond the age of fairy tales you certainly

## P R E F A C E

have not outgrown your love for charming pictures, and the book is full of them. I wish I might have seen the illustrations before I told the stories because then the stories would have been twice as good.

Oh, by the way, you children who are too old for the stories, won't you please read them out loud to your father and mother and show them the pictures?

*Your sincere friend,*

THE AUTHOR.



# A TABLE OF THE CONTENTS

TITLE	PAGE
THE GREEN BOY FROM "HARRAH"	1
THE BEAR THAT BECAME A PRINCE	17
TOD AND THE STOLEN HOLIDAYS	31
THE MILLION SILVER DOLLARS .	51
THE CROWS' SINGING LESSON .	69
THE STRONGEST BOY IN THE WHOLE WORLD . . . .	87
THE TOUCH OF GOLD . . . .	99
TARKUS AND THE IMITATION LIQUID AIR . . . . .	115
AMINADAB SKELCH AND HIS FREE LIBRARY . . . . .	131
OLIVER'S THREE GIFTS . . . .	151
JIM AND THE GOLD SPIRIT . . .	167
THE CAKE OF CHARITY . . . .	181
THE BOY WHO MADE A TROLLEY CAR . . . . .	199
CYRIL AND THE GNOME . . . .	215

<i>TITLE</i>	<i>PAGE</i>
THE BUBBLE BOY . . . .	231
THE RABBITS' EASTER EGGS .	247
THE TALE OF THE GOLDEN EGG	269
THE BOY WHO REQUIRED WIND- ING . . . . .	285
THE BOY WHO TURNED BOOKS INTO FOOD . . . . .	301
SYDNEY AND THE JAR FAIRY .	313

THE GREEN BOY FROM  
"HARRAH"





**O**H, how it rained! And how the wind blew! Sandy McMichael stood at the window of his bedroom, wondering whether there would be another flood, and rather hoping that there would be because he should like to see the animals going in two by two. It had rained for three days. He had read until he was tired, he had played with his lead soldiers until he had fought three Spanish wars and had never lost an American, and now

he was ripe for the fellowship of any kind of boy.

He peered up into the sky at the large drops that grew larger as they descended, and wished that he might be a drop of rain to have such a lovely long jump from the clouds to the earth. It would be better than jumping off the rafters in the barn. Hullo! there was a drop way up that must be the great-grandfather of the rest. How high it was and how it was growing! Sandy opened the window to watch it better, and the next minute a funny-looking little boy, with a skin as green as a maple leaf in mid-summer, and wearing a silken cloak of the color of old gold, landed on his feet upon the carpet beside Sandy.

"I've done it at last," said he in a piping voice that, while not unmusical, was different from any that Sandy had ever heard.



## THE GREEN BOY FROM "HARRAH"

"Where d'you come from?" Sandy asked the little chap.

"From Harrah," was the reply.

He was just about Sandy's size, but more slender, and his head was nearly twice as big. His eyes were yellow, and shone like electric lights. His hair was a lighter shade of green than his body, and his lips were straw color, uncanny-looking, and yet not unhandsome; and he was decidedly friendly, for he rubbed Sandy's cheeks with his long slender hands and made a cooing noise that evidently meant "I like you."

"Where's Harrah?" asked Sandy; but beyond pointing to the sky, the green boy did not explain. Probably he had come from a star and Harrah was what he called it. It is unlikely that the people who live in the stars know what we call them, and if a man came from Mars and was asked: "Well, how did you leave the folks at Mars?" he wouldn't understand, and

THE GREEN BOY FROM "HARRAH"

indeed might answer: "All well, including Ma."

Sandy, who always took things as they came, said: "Let's play checkers."

"All right," said the green boy, who certainly spoke good every-day English, although he had what was evidently a Harrahian accent.

"Oh, dear," said the little visitor suddenly, "I forgot to eat my history lesson before I came down, and if I don't know it to-morrow, my teacher will make me eat more geography than is good for me, just to punish me. Have you a history cake anywhere around?"

"A wh-a-at?" asked Sandy in amazement.

"A history cake. What do you call them? How would you learn your history lesson?"

"By studying so hard it would make me hate it," answered Sandy promptly.

## THE GREEN BOY FROM "HARRAH"

He was just taking up Greek history and lost all the good marks that American history had earned for him just because he wasn't interested in what a lot of dead Greeks had done.

"How funny!" said the green boy.  
"But I supposed that things would be different up here."

"You mean down here," said Sandy.

"No, I don't," said the green boy, suddenly leaping up three feet and sitting in mid air as easily as if he were on a seat. "I came up here from down there," pointing to the sky, "and we learn things down there by eating them. We have a speller that is ten cakes, and a bite is a lesson. There are about a hundred bites to a cake, and when you've eaten all the cakes, you know how to spell."

"Oh, don't I wish that I could learn my lessons that way! Say, what is your name?"

THE GREEN BOY FROM "HARRAH"

"Jorroel," said the green boy.

"Mine is Sandy. Say, Jorroel, how do you sit that way—on nothing?"

"Why, I make up my mind to do it, and then it comes easy. Down in Harrah we can do whatever we make up our minds to do."

"But, say," said Sandy, "do you like to eat those cakes?"

"Of course. Our parents think that it is best for us to learn all we can about spelling and reading and typewriting and arithmetic and this far distant planet that lights our night, and so they make the cakes as nice as they can be so that we'll like to learn things. I think that history cake is the best of the lot, because it's so nice and sour; but grammar cake I don't much like, because it's sweet, and boys don't like sweet things."

"Oh, don't they though? We earthly boys do. But, say, can't you take me up,

## THE GREEN BOY FROM "HARRAH"

or down, to Harrah and bring me back before bedtime?"

"Why, I can if you don't weigh more than fifty pounds. I can make up my mind to go back to Harrah and take you on my back if you're under fifty in weight. If you weigh more than that I can't budge you."

"I weigh forty-seven," said Sandy.

"Then get on my back," said Jorroel, jumping down from his invisible perch.

Sandy did so, and then Jorroel climbed up on the window ledge and made up his mind as hard as he could to go back to Harrah.

The next minute they were rushing through the air at a speed that would have made the Empire State Express turn as green, through envy, as Jorroel was. It may have been five minutes, but it didn't seem more than that many seconds, before they landed at Harrah, in the midst of

## THE GREEN BOY FROM "HARRAH"

an undulating meadow of lovely pink grass. Beautiful butterflies, that flamed like different colored lights and that sang more sweetly than nightingales, flew round and round in circles, until Sandy felt dizzy and said so. Then they turned and flew the other way. He soon found out that this thoughtfulness of other's feelings characterized every living thing in Harrah, which he imagined to be Mars, although he had no means of knowing. All around them globular dwellings full of windows floated in the air, and Jorroel told him that this was his native town and was called "Jarratol."

"Want to see where you came from?" he asked Sandy.

"Sure," said Sandy. I am sorry to say that he had several slang phrases that he would be glad to drop when he grew older and found how burr-like they were and as useless as burrs, too.



## THE GREEN BOY FROM "HARRAH"

"You can wait until night and look at it through a faralan. It's as yellow as my lips. Say, you must be hungry after your long ride. Come up to our house and read some dinner."

"Read it!" said Sandy. "You mean eat it."

Jorroel burst into a shrill laugh that sounded like the noise of a katydid. "We eat what we want to learn," said he, "but we read to keep ourselves from starving. What'll you read?"

"Some candy and pie," said Sandy at a venture.

"That's a good choice, I think. Come up, and we'll get them."

A few feet above where they were standing was a round house, not unlike a bubble, and like a bubble it floated hither and thither, not being fastened to the ground, and yet not going very far in any direction. Jorroel explained that the ground

## THE GREEN BOY FROM "HARRAH"

was so fertile that they did not like to waste it by using it to set houses upon, so the houses were all built in the air. Sandy found that he could walk up on the air to it as easily as he could tread solid ground on the earth, and he accompanied his friend to it. A pretty, green woman, not much bigger than Jorroel, and wearing a cloak made of a crimson, cob-webby stuff, sat at a table reading a book.

"Mamma, I've been to Sush at last. I knew I could do it if I made up my mind hard enough. And I've brought back a little boy from there, and he's hungry and wants to read some dinner."

Jorroel's mother came over and rubbed Sandy's cheeks, which seemed to be the Harrahian way of saluting one. Then she said, without being surprised that he had come so far :

"You must be hungry. Read whatever

## THE GREEN BOY FROM "HARRAH"

you want. You'll find the books on the shelf there."

Sandy stepped over to a book-case and saw a number of books in English. One said "Roast Beef," another said "Lemon Pie," another was marked "Potatoes," and others bore names that he had never heard of before and were probably those of foods that were peculiar to Harrah. The one marked "Lemon Pie" told how lemon pie was made, who invented it, and so on; and by the time Sandy had finished the account he felt just the same as if he had eaten a pie, but with this important difference—he hadn't had the fun of eating it. After lemon pie one doesn't care much about roast beef, so Sandy didn't read any of that.

It was growing dark. Sandy glanced out of the window and saw the earth just rising and flooding Harrah with lovely earth-light.

THE GREEN BOY FROM "HARRAH"

"That's where I came from, isn't it?" he asked.

"Yes," answered Jorroel, going to a closet and getting out a faralan.

"We call it the earth," said Sandy, "but I suppose it's your moon?"

"Yes," said Jorroel's mother, "but we call your earth Sush."

Jorroel handed him the faralan, which was much like a telescope, and he found that he could see New York through it.

"Now, if you want to learn something," said Jorroel's mother, "you might eat some arithmetic—that always comes in handy in any planet. Jorroel, get him the multiplication table up to five. I don't believe he knows it very well—if he's anything like you."

Jorroel went to the closet and returned in a moment with four sticks of what looked like candy to Sandy's earthly eyes. He found that they were sour, yet not

## THE GREEN BOY FROM "HARRAH"

unpleasant, but not a bit like candy. When he had eaten the last one, he knew his tables up to five.

"I really think I must be going. Mamma will worry," said he.

"I guess you can find your way back alone," said Jorroel. "Go just as you came, by the Milky Way. And come and see us often. I'll show you lots of things you never saw before, and I'd like you to pay us a long visit if your mother doesn't object."

"Yes," said the mother kindly, and then she rubbed his cheeks again, and he followed Jorroel out doors, or rather out windows, because they don't have doors in Harrah. Jorroel took Sandy by the ankles and hurled him by main strength toward the rising earth, and a few moments of rushing space brought the boy to his window-sill just as his dinner bell was ringing. He was so hungry after his trip

## THE GREEN BOY FROM "HARRAH"

that he was very glad to think that he would eat, and not read, dinner. On the way down stairs he asked himself how much four times four were, but he couldn't remember; and by the time he had been helped to everything eatable on the table his trip to Harrah was so hazy and dream-like that he said nothing to his parents about it. But he hoped that, if it was a dream, he would dream some more about it.



THE BEAR THAT BECAME  
A PRINCE





**H**ARRY ST. CLAIR was out walking with his cousin, Joe Gilbert. Joe was two years older than Harry, who was twelve; but they loved to take walks together because both were interested in botany. Now, don't put the book down and say, "No, thanks; I'll learn about that when it comes in my school course." Botany is extremely interesting, and I notice that people who take it up seldom drop it; but I never

took it up, so you've nothing to fear from me.

Harry lives on Staten Island, not far from New Brighton, and he was one of the first boys to see the "Raleigh" when she came back from Manila. In fact, it was the day after his walk with Joe that she came through the Narrows. But that hasn't anything to do with botany either.

The two boys walked inland, hunting for specimens of—the name escapes me, so you see I'm not trying to give you a botany pill at all. In the course of their walk they came upon a performing bear that was dancing to the music of a hand-organ in the hands of a weather-beaten old Italian. Now, as it happened, Harry had been reading about the prince that was turned into a bear—I've forgotten the title of the tale—and he turned and said to Joe, "I wonder if that bear was ever a prince?"

## THE BEAR THAT BECAME A PRINCE

The bear turned his poor, old, bleared eyes at him, and said, in a muffled voice :

“Standing here I supplicate,  
Save me from my dreadful fate.”

Harry rubbed his ears, and again the bear said the same words :

“Standing here I supplicate,  
Save me from my dreadful fate.”

Harry was delighted that the bear should have enough confidence in him to ask to be saved, and he said : “Are you a prince ?”

“I am indeed,” said the bear. “I belong to the royal family of England, and I was turned into a bear to satisfy the grudge of an anarchist. Save me, and grandma will never forget it.”

Harry didn't realize who “grandma” was, although her picture is on millions of coins all over the world. He looked at Joe and then at the organ-grinder. Either

they had not heard, or else they could not understand bear talk. Joe was picking a dandelion, or maybe it was a daisy. I can never tell them apart. I wish I *had* studied botany. Harry gave five cents to the organ-grinder, and said to the bear in an undertone :

“How can I save you?”

“Take your jack-knife and rip my hide down the back, and then wish me back to my former estate. You believe in fairies, and all that sort of thing, don’t you?”

Now, up to that minute, Harry had not really believed in anything of the sort. He had read the blue fairy book and the red one and Grimm’s and Andersen’s, but he had supposed they were only meant to amuse one—as a sort of antidote to school books—but I leave it to you if you wouldn’t believe a thoroughly respectable bear who confided his woes to you in perfectly good English?

## THE BEAR THAT BECAME A PRINCE

“What will the organ-grinder say?” said Harry. He was a thoughtful boy, and he knew that the bear was of great value to the man; but after all a right is a right and a wrong is a wrong, and it couldn’t be right to keep a prince in such a dusty bear’s skin, even if releasing him did ruin the poor Italian.

“Don’t worry about him,” said the bear. “He has made a fortune out of me, and as you see, he doesn’t give me enough to eat, and often he beats me when it is rainy and business is poor; so I don’t think you need worry on his account.”

Harry’s last scruples vanished. The organ-grinder was bent over his organ, changing the tune. Joe was climbing a bank after some red buttercups, and Harry whipped out his knife and opened it in a jiffy, and with as firm a hand as he could master, he ripped the bear’s hide down the back, and—a young, handsome boy stood

before him. He was not dressed like a fairy-story prince, because real princes don't dress that way, except at private theatricals; but he was attired in a modish suit that was becoming and in good taste, and Harry took a liking to him as soon as he saw him.

When the Italian looked up and saw the young man, he gave a shriek, and then crossed himself. Then he slung his organ over his shoulder and ran off in the direction of New Brighton.

Harry called to Joe, but he had disappeared. He was a very enthusiastic botanist, and probably he had found a new breed of violets or something or other, and was busy analyzing them.

Harry didn't waste any time looking for Joe. He was anxious to do something for the prince at once. He really hadn't bettered his condition much, because as a bear he was supported by the Italian, but as a



## THE BEAR THAT BECAME A PRINCE

prince he had only a few coins that had happened to be in his pocket when he was changed into a bear a few months previous.

"Did you say that you were related to Queen Victoria?" asked Harry.

"She's my grandma," said the boy, simply.

"Well, I guess my father can get you home to your folks all right. He has a good deal of influence. He's a lawyer. I know he'll be willing to telegraph over to your grandmother that you have stopped being a bear, and she'll probably send you a ticket home. And I guess you can visit us until she does."

They walked toward Harry's house, which was about a mile away. Suddenly Harry wheeled around. "Say," said he, "it would be bully fun to send that message ourselves. We can send it collect. Your grandma won't mind, will she?"

## THE BEAR THAT BECAME A PRINCE

The prince looked a little dubious. "I suppose not," he said. "You see, my name will make it a little expensive."

"Why, what's your name?" asked Harry.

"Edward Albert Patrick Alfred Athelstan Victor George Alexander Oscar Humbert Nicholas of Wales."

"Phe-ew!" whistled Harry. "And what do they call you for short?"

"Tot."

"Oh, what a name for a boy!" shouted Harry, and then, as he saw the prince color, he said: "Oh, I didn't mean anything; but you aren't a tot, you know?"

And he wasn't a tot by any means, for he was over five feet tall.

"Well, we'll go over to the telegraph office at New Brighton and let 'em know you're all right. I guess it won't break your grandmother."

## THE BEAR THAT BECAME A PRINCE

The prince was immensely pleased to think that he was going home so soon. He had been homesick even as a bear, and now that he was a boy again, he was wild to meet his mother and father and sisters—and his grandmother.

Harry and he swapped experiences on their way to the telegraph office, and the former was surprised to learn that the prince had led a good deal of a boy's life after all. He had supposed that no one could speak to a prince in England without getting down on his knees, but this one might be his schoolmate for all the airs he had.

Harry wrote the message, and spoiled five blanks in doing it. The prince was glad to leave it to him. The sixth trial was successful, and the cablegram read: "Prince Edward Albert Patrick Alfred Athelstan Victor George Alexander Oscar Humbert Nicholas of Wales has been

THE BEAR THAT BECAME A PRINCE

turned into a boy again. Send money for his return. Collect. Answer.

“HARRY.”

“I was afraid to use ‘Tot,’ because it didn’t seem to give enough facts. But your name is a regulyer of a railroad train, and they’ll know it must be you when they see it,” said Harry.

He addressed the message to “Queen Victoria, London, England.”

“The operator there has probably heard of her,” said Harry, smiling.

The operator never raised an eyebrow when he took the message. Maybe he thought it was in cypher. Maybe he didn’t care what it was.

The message sent, the boys sat down to wait for an answer, and while they were talking together, a hand-organ outside the door struck up “God Save the Queen.” At the first tones the prince stepped to the

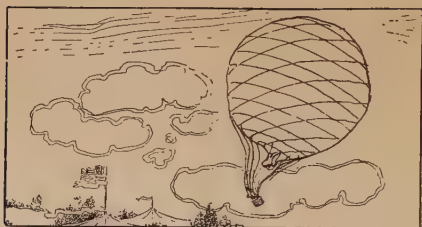
door. The organ-grinder was facing the doorway, and he recognized the prince in an instant. It was our old friend, who had decided to stay in the vicinity awhile, in hopes of recovering his bear. As soon as he saw the prince, he said something in Italian and made a pass at him and—that I should have to tell it!—the prince turned into a snuffy, dusty, blear-eyed, commonplace old bear in an instant, and suffered himself to be led away in the direction of the ferry to New York.

Harry did not notice his absence till he was out of sight, and then, although he traced him to the ferry-boat, he lost him because the boat had gone.

If any of you who read this see a swarthy Italian with a scar on his right cheek and a fierce black moustache, and if he has a hand-organ and a tired-looking bear, that bear is the prince.



TOD AND THE STOLEN  
HOLIDAYS







**I**T would have been easy to discover good qualities in Tod Pendleton. He was kind-hearted and brave and good-humored, but he was also greedy. As an illustration of this latter quality let me tell an incident connected with his boyhood that my grandfather told me. Years ago there was a kind of candy known as the "Jackson ball." It was as large around as a crab-apple and as hard as a stone pavement is when you fall headlong on it. Well,

one day Timotheus Pauncefort found a cent in the road, and, as he was a most generous little fellow, he immediately invited Tod to go with him to the little candy-store on the corner, and he'd treat him to whatever he wanted. Most boys would have chosen taffy as being easy to divide; but Tod, never thinking about Timotheus, said he guessed he'd take a Jackson ball, and Timotheus bought one—they came one for a cent. But, as there is no way to dispose of them but to suck them to their dissolution, Timotheus didn't get a taste. They came out of the candy-store two happy boys—Timotheus happy because he had provided a feast for his friend, and Tod happy because it had been provided without costing him anything.

It was when Tod was eleven years old that his greed caused trouble to the whole of the United States on two very import-

ant days. Just what year it was, I cannot say, but your great-grandfather may remember. His parents took him to a balloon ascension at Rockeford Park, a place where they hold fairs and poultry-shows every fall.

It is not for me to say how he managed to do it. I don't think he was ever clear in his own mind how it came about, but it is a well-known fact that when you cut the rope that holds a balloon to the earth, that balloon is going to escape if it has a spark of animation. I suppose the balloonist had gone to lunch; but wherever he was, he was not in the balloon when Tod stepped into the basket to see how the old thing worked; and as Tod was a perfectly fearless and reckless boy, he did not think of the moral or physical consequences, but simply sawed away at the rope with his jack-knife until the balloon sprang up like a lark from its nest in the meadow,

and was soon out of hearing of the angry owner.

My grandfather told me that the farmer's horse began to cut up just as Tom was severing the rope, and that that drew away the attention of the sight-seers. Certainly there never was a madder man than the owner of that balloon, and he called the bystanders all sorts of names for not interfering to save his precious balloon.

As for Tod, he was tickled to death. He waved farewell to the crowds below, sang snatches of songs, and sat on the edge of the basket with his legs dangling over until his mother fainted; then, as he happened to see her, he drew in his legs: he did not like to occasion unnecessary pain.

After he had been in the balloon some ten hours, and had sailed I don't know how many miles, he became very hungry, and, seeing land a quarter of a mile above

him, he decided to leave the balloon and take a short walk for exercise if he could fasten his anchor anywhere. The balloonist had placed an emergency anchor in the balloon, and if he hadn't, no one would ever have heard of Tod again—so my grandfather said.

He was now some three hundred miles above the earth, higher than any man of science has ever been, and yet he did not feel cold, nor bleed at the ears, nor do any of those unpleasant things that aeronauts seem to consider so necessary.

That there should be land up in the air struck him as odd at first, and then he reflected that there were many things connected with the heavens that he knew nothing about, and this land was undoubtedly one of them.

As he sped past a little cape of land that jutted out into the air, he was able to throw the anchor into a tree, and a mo-

ment later the balloon was captive, and he was sliding down the rope to what looked like solid earth. But it was not as solid as it looked. In fact, it was a cloud, and if a handsome little boy, clad in what looked like an autumn sunset, had not stretched out his hand and caught him, Tod would have had a bad fall.

“Here, drink this, and you’ll be able to walk without sinking,” said the little stranger. He handed a golden cup to Tod as he spoke, and Tod was only too glad to drink, for he was thirsty after his 300-mile flight. The liquid tasted like all the kinds of soda water you ever heard of, poured into one glass and flavored with essence of orange flower. As soon as Tod had drunk it he felt as light as a feather, and walked on the cloud as if it had been *terra firma*, which, my grandfather told me, is Latin for solid ground.

## TOD AND THE STOLEN HOLIDAYS

Ask your teacher whether the old gentleman was right.

“What’s the name of this place, and how far is it to the earth, and what’s your name, and what do you do up here, and where can I get such a pretty suit? It looks like the view from our verandah when the sun is going down.”

“I can tell you’re from the earth by the questions you ask,” said the other boy, laughing. He was such a pretty fellow; very much like the Cupids on valentines.

“Well, I’d never learn anything if I didn’t ask questions. Where do you live, and why don’t you fall through?”

“I’m the child of sunset. But say, you haven’t learned anything so far by asking questions, for you don’t wait for the answers. You only ask to keep your tongue from getting lazy.”

Tod laughed and said:

"I bet I can beat you running."

"I guess not," said the Sunset Boy, and with that both of them began to run as hard as they could; but, although Tod's feet hardly touched the ground, so easily did he move through cloudland, yet the other boy moved twice as fast, and soon vanished behind a high wall that surrounded a huge castle that looked like those cloud palaces that rear themselves on June days when you are lying on your back out in the fields and wishing that the long vacation would begin. It was snowy white, and had towers and minarets, and the wall of salmon pink that surrounded it changed its shape continually.

While Tod was wondering what castle it was, and whether any giants lived within it, a tall warrior, who looked exactly as if he was fashioned out of a silver cloud, with little flashes of opalescent fire run-



ning through him, came to an opening in the wall, and said :

“What is your name, Earth Boy, and why have you come to the storehouse of the holidays?”

Before Tod could answer, his friend, the Sunset Boy, popped out from behind the wall and said :

“He’s all right. He can run half as fast as I can.”

The warrior seemed astonished. “Why, that is impossible. No one in cloudland can run a quarter as fast as you.”

“Well, he did. I leave it to him if he didn’t. And he’s hungry, and he wants to know everything. And say”—this in a lower tone—“can’t you give him seven or eight holidays? We have such a lot.”

“But,” said the warrior, who all this time had been changing his shape like an April cloud and was by turns a Polar bear, a Hubbard squash, a hippopotamus,

a load of hay, and an apple tree, "there are just so many holidays. If I let him have some, the earth folk will have to do without them."

Tod now spoke up :

"Say, my father says he wishes there were no such things as holidays. He's so used to working that he never knows what to do on a holiday, and he gets awful cross, and he's always glad when night comes. Last Christmas he said he wished Christmas had never been discovered."

"Well," said the warrior, who now looked like the map of France, and a moment later like a teapot, "if that's the case, you can have all the holidays you want. I thought people prized them down there."

"No, indeed," said Tod. "Why, teacher says they de-de-demoralize the boys and we never do as well the day after a holiday."

“Come inside, then, and help yourself. What days do you want?”

Tod stepped into the cloud palace, and found himself in the midst of banks of such beautiful colors as you never saw, even when the sun was doing his prettiest—bounding billows of purple and saffron and green and crimson and violet. Tod was only a boy, and boys don't go in for that sort of thing very much, but he told his mother afterward that it was all so gorgeous that it made him feel like crying.

“Take a header into the midst of them, and you'll reach the room where the Christmases are stored.”

Tod dived, and a moment later found himself in a room filled to overflowing with Christmas presents and Christmas trees and Christmas horns and sleigh-bells and yards upon yards of good will.

“Now,” said his guide, who had be-

come another being like the Sunset Boy, only older, "take your choice. You can have one Christmas or one Fourth, but you can't have more than one at once. In the next room are Lincoln days, and the room next to that is filled with Grant days."

"What's a Grant day?" asked Tod.

"Oh, that's a holiday that they haven't begun to use yet, but when they do, they'll find me prepared."

Tod thought he'd like one Christmas, and he had no sooner expressed the wish than he found himself and the Sunset Boy on a cloud by themselves surrounded with all the Christmas presents that a boy ever wished for—guns, pistols, marbles, books, skates, baseball bats, footballs, fencing foils, double rippers, wheels, kodaks, and a big hand-organ with a grinning monkey sitting on it; and candy and fruit until you'd think of a doctor.

He told the Sunset Boy to pitch in, and all that day he ate and read and rode and shot holes in distant clouds, and took snap-shots of the Sunset Boy, and taught him how to box, and by nightfall was the tiredest boy who ever visited a cloud. He had had enough Christmas to last him three years.

The next morning he woke up in the Fourth of July room, and he wanted to turn over and go to sleep ; but the warrior said that he must choose a holiday, as long as he had been so keen for it. So he chose the Fourth—because the warrior had pulled one out of place and he didn't want to disoblige him.

At sight of the heaps of firecrackers and Union torpedoes and grasshoppers and fiery dragons and cannons, his enthusiasm returned ; and when he found himself with the Sunset Boy on a new cloud with nothing to remind him of Christmas

on it, he set out to have fun. But the premature discharge of a bunch of cannon crackers set fire to the cloud on which they were sailing, and when the Sunset Boy had put out the fire with a rain cloud, he found that all the firecrackers were wet, and so the morning was not as noisy as you might have supposed it would be. In the evening Tod did thoroughly enjoy himself. Every set piece you ever heard of was there, and he and the Sunset Boy hung them on the edge of a great bank of clouds that looked portentous and lowering until it was lighted up, and then it resembled fairyland. One million rockets going off at once make a spectacle that you don't see every day in the year, and there were long articles in the earth papers the day after, telling about the shooting stars that had come ahead of time. But the astronomers were able to give good reasons for their appearance, and not a

## TOD AND THE STOLEN HOLIDAYS

soul imagined that Tod was at the bottom, or rather the top, of the display.

The morning after the Fourth, Tod had a splitting headache, and said he was sick of holidays, and he'd like to go down to earth. His two friends bade him good-by, and he stepped into the basket of the balloon, and thanks to a little help from a heavy wind cloud that he fastened under the basket, he reached the earth in a few minutes, and in the midst of a terrific wind storm.

When the third of July came the next month, it found people everywhere making preparations for the celebration of the Fourth, but greedy Tod had already celebrated it up in cloudland, and there was no Fourth. People everywhere slept through that day, and there were some who would have blessed Tod, but the small boys were furious. They could not explain it. They went to bed with all

their ammunition within reach, and when they woke up they realized that somehow the Fourth had come and gone and they hadn't fired a shot—and yet the ammunition had all disappeared.

Tod slept with the rest. But when the Christmas season came along, he hoped that he could celebrate it. His adventure was now six months back, and six months in a boy's life are a good deal more than half a year. He made his preparations for Christmas as usual, in common with all the rest of the boys, who make much of the great holiday, but it was all to no purpose. As your grandparents may have told you, everybody slept over the glad season and woke the day after with much better digestions, but deeply regretting that they had lost a Christmas that they could never regain. And Tod felt worse than anybody else, and realized what a pig he had been. He



## TOD AND THE STOLEN HOLIDAYS

really cultivated his generosity to good effect for the next few weeks.

But the following year all the holidays went off with a bang, and I've heard my grandfather say that he believed it did folks good to go without a holiday once in a while, as they appreciated them better. But I say, a place for each holiday, and every holiday in its place.



THE MILLION SILVER  
DOLLARS





THERE were just two rooms and an attic in John Allen's house —an attic of which the flooring was so insecure that the rats had several times threatened to migrate to a safer house. Just the sort of place for a future President of the United States to choose as his birthplace. But if John Allen ever becomes President, I pity the people of this country. Not because John is bad, but because he is lazy and suspicious, two

qualities that would not set well on a ruler of a republic.

John and his mother were so poor that the rats sometimes felt that it was not very creditable to their rodencies that they continued to live off of the hospitality of the poverty-stricken pair; but after all, where there is food there is bound to be some crumbs, and so the rats stayed on; and John and his mother wondered if people could be any poorer than they were and continue to live.

One day John went out to the spring to get a pail of water for his mother, as boys have done ever since there were mothers, pails, and sons, and that's more years than even you can remember. He lived near Summit, New Jersey, on the Watchung range of hills.

While he was at the spring and wondering how he could get through the rest of the day without doing any work, a

handsome man on horseback rode up and asked John very civilly how far it was to Murray Hill, which is the name of a hamlet near Summit.

“About a mile, sir,” said John, who was not the sort of boy to refuse to answer a question, although he liked better to ask them.

“Thank you, my boy. Would you like a million dollars in silver?” You see the traveler was not above joking with the lad.

Well, now, some boys would promptly have said no, and would have run home with the water. But John dearly loved to talk; so he set the pail down by the edge of the spring, and said, “Yes, sir, I would, if I weren’t so afraid of being robbed.”

The traveler burst out laughing.

“Why, have you thought of that part of it already? That doesn’t generally

## THE MILLION SILVER DOLLARS

come until after we have secured the millions, and then it is a disquieting thought, I'll admit. So you'd fear robbers?"

"Yes, sir, because the million dollars would tempt them if it was known I had so much money, and I'd never dare do anything but guard it day and night. But that wouldn't be so bad, for then I should not have to hoe. I read something in a paper that I understood to mean that it is wicked to hoe, and I don't want to be wicked, and anyhow hoeing makes me tired and slants my brow, mother says; so I generally let her do it."

Now what in the world John was driving at I don't know, but it only shows that children ought not to be allowed to read the newspapers—except the Children's Department.

The traveler laughed again, and said, "Boy, you ought not to be so suspicious.



I have a hundred millions, and no one ever stole a cent from me."

John was interested, but not convinced. Because the traveler had been free from thieves, it did not follow that he would be. As for the traveler, although he had started in to chaff the boy, he now decided to try him and see what use he would make of a million dollars and whether it would benefit him or the reverse. He was in the habit of giving a million dollars to found hospitals and libraries and soup kitchens, as freely as you give five cents to the heathen when your father gives it to you for that purpose. So a million dollars for the poor boy would be nothing to him, and he said :

"Well, if you will leave that pail of water there and come with me to Summit, I'll give you a million dollars just as soon as I can arrange to have it sent out from New York. Of course, I have not that

much with me—in silver—for my horse is built for speed and not for strength ; and of course, there are certain conditions that go with this money. I never give without naming some condition. You must bury all the money except what you need for daily use, and you must regularly give to the poor or else you will be sorry.”

John, like most people, hated gifts that had strings to them. The best gift is a free gift, and at first John was tempted to say to the horseman, “Oh, keep your money.” But when he reflected that the million dollars would not only buy him a new suit and a bicycle and a new shawl for his mother, and pay for the services of a professional hoeman who didn’t care a scrap about his brow, he left the spring and the pail of water and approached nearer to the wonderful stranger.

“When do you think the money will come ? ”

## THE MILLION SILVER DOLLARS

The traveler looked at his watch. "It is now twelve. If I telegraph to have it shipped, I ought to get it by four o'clock, for I'll have it sent in an express car. If you want it, jump up behind me at once and come along, as I have a directors' meeting to attend at two, and I must make haste."

But now John was suddenly overcome with suspicions. This might be a highwayman who would rob him of his rags; so he said, not gratefully, but in a tone of doubt, "I don't know you. Suppose——"

But at this the stranger slapped his horse's flank with the flat of his hand and was out of sight in a minute.

John filled the pail, and went into the house, and told his mother what had happened. She was one of the most artless women who ever handled a hoe, and as unsuspicious as John was the opposite, and she was fond of money, if you can be said

to be fond of a thing you never have seen; so she was ill pleased at his news.

“Why, John, you should not have suspected the good man. I’m sure no one ever offered us half as much as that before, and it is not likely that anyone will again. I wish you had gone with him.”

“But, mother, I thought you wanted the water.”

“Oh, child, I was not so thirsty but that I could have waited until we got the million, before I drank. Many men have given up all that made life dear to get a million, and what’s a drink of water against a fortune?”

These words from his mother made John feel that he had not been wise; so he went out to the spring and waited there for the rest of the day, although there was plenty of work to do around the miserable house. But the stranger did not come back.

The next day, at about the same hour, John again took up his station at the spring, and after a wait of an hour, he was rewarded by seeing the stranger riding back, this time from Summit. As soon as John saw him, he ran to meet him.

"Well, boy, fortune does not often knock twice at a man's door, but as fortune and I are old friends I've made him do it; and if you think that you can trust me, I'll take you to Summit and we'll hunt up that million dollars. It's there by now."

Almost before the words were out of his mouth John had leaped to the horse's back in an ecstasy of joy, and had said, "Go where you will. Mother said I could trust you."

"Now that was really kind in the lady," said the stranger, with a queer smile. "I will show her that she did not misjudge me. I will confess that it vexed me yes-

terday to think that a poor boy like you should be afraid of a millionaire; but then I thought you probably never saw one before, and so I decided not to bear malice. We'll go to Summit, and I'll point out the car, and pay the workmen in advance to help you get it up here, and then you must bury it and use it as I have prescribed, or ——"

The traveler did not finish the word, but John imagined the worst and sighed.

The way to Summit was neither hard nor long, and they soon reached the town, riding over a bridge and right down to the freight station.

The stranger inquired at the office for a freight car that had nothing whatever in it but a million silver dollars. The freight agent, who was very busy, said: "I believe that such a car came in, but I've got so much to attend to that I can't be sure. Go hunt it up and take the money, and

## THE MILLION SILVER DOLLARS

sometime when I'm not so busy you can sign a receipt for it."

So the stranger hitched his horse to a trunk that stood on the platform, and then walked across the track to the side-track on which lay the car. Sure enough, when they opened the door, several hundred dollars rolled out and all over the ground. John did not bother to pick them up, as there were so many more where they came from. The stranger had already hired workmen to cart the money away, and twelve men with coal-carts now appeared on the scene all ready to do the work for which they had been paid.

The men were not much surprised to see all the money, because they did not for a minute suppose it was real. They thought it was the waste from a tin factory, simply because it was beyond belief that a man would give one million silver dollars to a twelve-year-old

boy, and you can't believe what's unbelievable.

The stranger now had to take a train to New York; so he left his horse as a present to John, and shook hands with him, and John was so busy running his hands through the money and letting it drop like sand in an hour-glass from one hand to another, that he actually forgot to thank his benefactor.

It took the men several hours to empty the car; and I'm sure I don't know what Summit people were doing that they did not notice the million dollars going over the bridge and up the hill into the woods, but they didn't, and in mid-afternoon John arrived without accident at his miserable shanty. Oh, I forgot to say that when he went to get the horse, which had been hitched to the trunk, he found it had eaten the whole top off of that receptacle, much to the disgust of a woman who wanted to



take the next train, but who had to go into town and buy a new trunk and pack it on the station platform with the wind blowing her belongings all along the Delaware and Lackawanna road. It never entered John's selfish head to pay her for the damage the horse had done. His mind was too engrossed with his suddenly acquired wealth.

His mother came out to meet the caravan, and she nearly went crazy at sight of the money. Imagine twelve coal carts loaded to overflowing with bright, new, gleaming dollars! Why, it would have attracted attention even in Wall Street, where every man is a millionaire—or wishes he were.

“Bury it back of the house, John, dear. The earth is softer there, and it will be easier for the men to dig.”

So said his mother; but John replied, “I don't know as I care how hard it is for

them to dig, mother. They've been paid, so what's the odds?"

Well, now, you know there was a good deal of odds. There's no use in piling work on a man or a woman just because you're paying him. All people have feelings, even men with shovels or hoes.

And the first digger took a dislike to John right away, and determined to come some dark night and carry off some of the "money" and give it to his children to play store with—you see none of them could believe it was real money.

But John suspected him of having such thoughts, and he said, forgetting the warning of the stranger, "I guess I'd rather have it where I can have my eyes on it day and night. Just put it up in the attic."

Of course he was boss, and the men had to obey him; so the first cart was backed up in front of the attic window—which was not more than ten feet from the ground—

## THE MILLION SILVER DOLLARS

and the men began to shovel the money into the house. At the first shovelful about half fell through the chinks in the floor to the room below, and the rats deserted the house. But disregarding this warning, John bade the men go ahead and shovel it all in. Well, I'll leave you to figure how packed that attic became. One million silver dollars take up a good deal of room and weigh a good deal, as the old house evidently thought. For, just as the last shovelful of dollars was pitched in, the miserable building tottered and fell, and Mrs. Allen barely escaped being hurled under it.

But the worst of it was that, as John had disobeyed the injunction of the great millionaire, the money began to roll and roll through the woods and far away. Some of it went into the brooks, some of it went into woodchuck and snake holes, some of it rolled a mile before it stopped, but like

THE MILLION SILVER DOLLARS

snow in a hot sun it all disappeared, and a half-hour later John and his mother were as poor as before.

I wish that I could say that John had learned a lesson and ceased to be suspicious, but he didn't. To this day he haunts the spring, leaving his mother to do all the work.

But the stranger rides no more.

THE CROWS' SINGING  
LESSON





**C**ROWS are everywhere acknowledged to be very wise birds, and if there is no proverb "as crafty as a crow," there ought to be. But it is not every crow who can read the newspaper, and that is why the leader of the big flock that made things unpleasant for farmers around Norfolk, Connecticut, was called the King of all the Crows in New England. For he could read print like a naturalized voter, and many and many is

## THE CROWS' SINGING LESSON

the scrap of newspaper that he has picked up in his claws and carried away to the top of some high tree, there to read it to a solemn conclave who said few words until he had finished it, but who then broke into the discordant cawing that farmers hate to hear even more than they hate the tenuous whine of the mosquito.

It was a gray day in January, and about two hundred big crows had assembled in an oak near the sand lot to hear a paper read by the King, whom the rest called Greyquill, because he had one gray feather in his head, just above his left eye, that gave him a rakish look.

“Now, if you’ll let up on your talking for a minute, I’ll begin to read; but the first one to interrupt me with his ugly voice I’ll chase clear to Canaan.”

“Stop talking, everybody,” yelled each crow to every other until the noise resembled that in a church fair when the richest



## THE CROWS' SINGING LESSON

man in town has gone away without buying anything.

Greyquill made a few vicious jabs at the birds who sat nearest to him on the limb of the big oak that was their hall of assembly, and which was still decorated with the dried, yellow leaves that winter's storms had been powerless to dislodge, and silence fell on the group of ill-favored birds.

It so happened that the only boy in Norfolk, or, indeed, in Litchfield County, for that matter, who understood crow language—Curtiss Nettleton by name—was on his way home from watching the golfers, and he passed under the tree just as the king crow cleared his throat as much as it is possible for a crow to do such a thing, and began to read. The crows were all so curious to hear what was coming that they did not notice the boy at all. And, indeed, they would

## THE CROWS' SINGING LESSON

not have cared much if they had, for he was one of those rare boys who inspire confidence in all animals. Stray dogs came to him to be petted, vicious bulls had a pleasant look for him, strange cats would jump upon his shoulders, and robins and thrushes would boldly hop into the pockets of his sack-coat to get the crumbs that he always kept there for just such occasions.

"I don't know what the name of this paper is, as the head line is torn off," said Greyquill, "but I don't suppose that makes very much difference to you. And yet I think I read something in this same paper that was not at all friendly to crows."

"Are you going to read or are you only going to talk? It's long past lunch time, and I'm hungry," said one of the youngest, and, necessarily, one of the pertest crows.

## THE CROWS' SINGING LESSON

Greyquill gave him a glance that made him hop down at least three branches nearer the ground, and then the old crow continued without further interruption.

“This article is about the song-birds. It says : ‘Nothing could be more senseless than to kill or in any way injure the various song-birds that make spring melodious in New England. What if they help themselves to a bit of corn now and then, or reward themselves for a full-throated concert by picking a cherry here and there? The good they do in making the world less sad more than balances their tiny thefts, and the man who shoots or snares a song-bird is a man whose heart is so far out of place that no physician on earth has power to set it right. Kill the crows if you will, for, besides stealing, they make a most unmelodious noise ; but spare the little opera singers who make the woodlands merry, and who

## THE CROWS' SINGING LESSON

have contributed to the poetry and literature of the world by inspiring the poets and prose writers to emulate their cadenzas.' ”

Greyquill read very well indeed for a crow, and Curtiss had no trouble in understanding him. Hardly had he made an end when he was assailed with so many questions that you could have heard the crows as far as West Norfolk, and that's three miles at least.

“Is that why farmers hate us?”  
“Where do these other birds get their fine voices?” “I never thought a bobolink could sing. Sounds like a spring in a clock that had been set a-jangling.”  
“Who thinks I have a harsh voice? Hear me. Caw, caw, caw.”

Everyone of the two hundred had something to say about the article, and said it in the most raucous voice, so that Curtiss instinctively put his hands to

## THE CROWS' SINGING LESSON

his ears, and the involuntary motion caused his presence to become known.

"Hello, Curtiss. What do you think of this article?" asked Greyquill, flying down in front of the boy and looking at him with his head perked on one side.

"Why, I think you'd better cultivate your voices," said Curtiss, laughing.

"That's all right. But who's going to teach us to sing?"

"No one can teach me to sing," said one vain crow; but a companion, with a voice like a broken buzz-saw, said: "Oh, really, Jack, you make me weary. Your voice sounds as if some one had dumped a load of gravel on it. Now, my voice—"

Here all the birds began talking at once, and more than one farmer in the vicinity said: "We're going to have a curse of crows next summer, I'm afraid."

"I don't know what to tell you," said Curtiss, when the crows stopped for breath.

## THE CROWS' SINGING LESSON

"I know a bobolink who used to give singing lessons, but he went away last July, and I don't know where he is now."

"Probably in South Carolina," said an old bird who had traveled a good deal. "Those bobolinks are great for going South, but a funny thing about 'em is that you can't get 'em to sing down there. Either the Southerners don't like their kind of music or else it's too hot to attempt anything in the song line down there."

"Yes," said Greyquill, "and what's the consequence? They shoot 'em and make pot pies of 'em down there. That just proves what this fellow says. Mankind like music, and when they don't get it, they get mad and begin to shoot. I believe that, if we all learn to sing something that folks will call sweet, the farmers won't begrudge us the little corn we take, and

## THE CROWS' SINGING LESSON

I'd give my tail feathers to find out where to get the necessary lessons."

"I have it," suddenly said Curtiss. "There's a man here in Norfolk who has a mocking-bird, and the mocking-bird can sing any bird's tune he has ever heard. Now, if you want me to ask this one what he'd charge to teach you all to sing, I'll do it this afternoon, and if he's willing, I'll bring him down to-morrow."

"Oh, do. The very thing," said Grey-quill, flapping his wings for joy; and then there was another deafening clamor, and the birds all circled through the air, just to work off their spirits, and while they were flapping heavily around, Curtiss went home.

Next day after school, Curtiss went round to the Perkins house, where the mocking-bird was spending the winter. He belonged to some summer people who did not care to bother with a bird in the

## THE CROWS' SINGING LESSON

city in the winter. He was called Silver-throat and he could imitate a bobolink, a goldfinch, a robin, a thrush, a canary, a song sparrow, and a half a score of foreign birds whose songs are never heard in these parts, for the city people had once taken him on a voyage around the world and he had caught a new air with each changing breeze.

Curtiss asked him what he would charge for teaching the crows how to sing melodiously. He burst out laughing.

"Why, I'd as soon expect to teach a pig to squeal in tune as to teach a crow to sing. They have absolutely no ear at all."

"Still, you are so very clever," said Curtiss, "that maybe you could teach them some of the simplest tunes, and I'm sure it would make a difference with the farmers, because I know that it is maddening, after your corn has all been pulled



## THE CROWS' SINGING LESSON

up, to hear a crow cawing as if he was laughing at you instead of singing, 'I merely took a grain or two to keep my voice in trim.' Come along with me, and we'll talk it over with old Greyquill. He's a very decent sort of a chap, and he knows a lot, and has been everywhere."

The mocking-bird, although uncaged, was not in the habit of leaving the Perkins farm, and he welcomed a little change; so he readily consented to accompany Curtiss after he had preened his feathers a little—for birds are almost as vain as human beings, and he wanted to look his best.

Then, with Silver-throat on his shoulder, Curtiss started off on a dog-trot over to the sand lot. Long before they reached there, they heard the crows chattering as hard as if they were building the tower of Babel. But as soon as they saw the pair

## THE CROWS' SINGING LESSON

they stopped. Greyquill flew forward, and offered a bug to Silver-throat, who accepted it with a pretty turn of his head and a little trill like that in the middle of a canary's song.

"Well, I suppose Curtiss has told you what we want. Can't you give us a little concert, so that we may judge just what sort of music we wish to learn?" said Greyquill, with as much of an air as if he were a great authority on music, when the fact was he did not know the difference between the song of a robin and that of a bullfinch.

The mocking-bird was not unwilling to show his powers, and he sang one song after another. The crows sat on the branch around him, and said after each song: "How sweet! What a dainty little thing!" "That's sweetly pretty." "That's classical, but I understand it."

Curtiss could hardly keep his face

## THE CROWS' SINGING LESSON

straight. He had attended a musicale in New York the winter before, when he visited his cousin, and the crows acted for all the world like the musical people there.

"Well, now, let's come to business," said Greyquill. "If you will teach us half a dozen of your best songs, we'll give you a year's supply of corn."

This arrangement was very satisfactory to Silver-throat, and he immediately formed a class in singing. Naturally, they wanted to learn a regular song before they had learned to run the scale, and of all songs in the bird repertory they chose that of the Patti of the birds, the bobolink.

"Very well, if you think you can do it," said Silver-throat, with a wise smile. "Bob-o-link, bob-o-link, ting kertang kertink." The mocking-bird sang it as sweetly as any Robert of Lincoln ever did.

"Cahh, cahh, cahh," grated the crows.

## THE CROWS' SINGING LESSON

"No, no. Bob-o-link, bob-o-link, ting kertang kertink," repeated the mocking-bird.

"Cawer, cawer, cawer," rasped the crows.

Sweetly and patiently the mocking-bird sang once more. "Bob-o-link, bob-o-link, ting-kertang-kertink."

"Cuh, cuh, cuh," scraped the crows in despair.

And then the little mocking-bird shook his head and said :

"It's no use, my dear friends. You're not a bit musical, and it's simply a waste of time to try to teach music to an unmusical bird. Your old caw is better than these fearsome attempts at the bobolink's song ; and if you band together and avoid quarrels among yourselves, most of you will escape the farmer's shotgun. But as for singing, I'd as soon expect to teach Curtiss how to fly. I can fly, and I can

## THE CROWS' SINGING LESSON

sing; but he can't fly, and you can't sing. I'll sing among you, and when the farmer comes around, you fly, and we'll all be better off."

Then the crows all fell to talking at once, and under cover of the confusion Curtiss and the mocking-bird came away, laughing so hard that the mocking-bird rasped his throat and couldn't sing anything more difficult than a Phœbe bird's song all next day.



THE STRONGEST BOY IN  
THE WHOLE WORLD







**L**EWIS JACKSON was just eight years old, and to look at him you would not have suspected that he was anything more than a happy, hearty, ordinary country boy. As a matter of fact, however, he was the strongest boy in the world, and all on account of the "iron" greenings. You see, Mr. Jackson, Lewis's father, had a large apple orchard, and right in the middle of it was a tree of greenings, and the day that Lewis was born the old

man buried a lot of rusty irons and iron barrel-hoops and the scraps of a cast-iron stove at the foot of the tree, because it had never borne an apple and he thought the strength of the iron rust might do it good. That was in December, and early in May that tree was so covered with apple blossoms that it looked as if an immense flock of butterflies had descended on it and were resting preparatory to flying somewhere else. That summer the tree was loaded with greenings, and Lewis's brother, a harum scarum child of six, gave the seven-months-old baby one of the apples to eat—not only that, but cut it up for him; and instead of dying in convulsions, the infant, who had been sickly before, thrived upon it. The village physician was called in to look at the child, and he immediately said that he was what is called a *pudenza amachyrtis*—that is, one to whom apples are necessary. He advised them to throw

away all their milk and let the child eat all the apples he could—but only from the one tree. “He is likely to absorb so much iron that he will be the strongest child in the world.” He analyzed one of the apples when he got home, and found that it was ninety per cent. iron and only ten per cent. apple; so, of course, any child who ate nothing but these apples would absorb so much iron that his muscles would be hard as anvils.

Mr. Jackson was one of those men who always think they have the best of everything. His cattle were the heaviest in the country, his fruit was the finest, his wife made the best cheese, his dog was the best sheep dog, his Sunday hat was the cheapest that any man had ever worn to church. So you can imagine that the chance of having the strongest son in the world appealed to him, and he told his wife to make enough apple-butter from those

greenings to supply the baby when the apples themselves were all eaten, or until more apples were ripe.

As a consequence, when little Lewis was eight years old he was just as strong as a pair of cattle, and he liked nothing better than to show his strength. If he hadn't been good-natured, I'm sure I don't know what might have happened, because he could have pulled the schoolhouse to pieces and could uproot saplings of several years' growth.

Of course, it was a great saving to his father to have such a strong son. Lewis would clear a field of rocks in a single day, wrenching them out of the earth and tossing them over the fence as if they had been pebbles instead of bowlders. Then, too, he did all the ploughing. He'd start out in the morning with some apples in his pocket and a plough at his heels, and by noon he'd have done the work of a pair

of cattle, and would have thought it fun, too. But if for any reason he was unable to eat for a few hours, his strength left him and he was just like other boys. He used to carry a supply of apples in his pockets; but one day when he was pulling a load of feed up from the village, he found he had eaten his last apple, and his strength left him, and he had to leave the wagon by the side of the road and run home for an apple. But when he returned, he picked up the shafts and skipped up the hills like a colt in a meadow on a frosty morning.

There is a high mountain near the Jackson place called Mt. Nomadnettuck. It is twenty miles high, and is considered by some geographers to be the highest mountain in New England, although whether New England extends as far into the air as that is a thing that I rather doubt, so the mountain may not be in

New England after all. Anyway, the view from the top is fine, and on a clear day you can see the sun from its apex. One summer Mr. Jackson had a houseful of boarders, and they were all crazy to go to the top of this mountain, but he had no horse, and Lewis was too busy with farm work to take them up in the big carryall.

“If I get my buckwheat all planted by the Fourth of July, I’ll give Lewis a holiday, and he can drag you to the top. It’s too far to walk, and the road is too rough for my cattle, but Lewis has been faithful all the spring, and I’m willing to let him have a day of pleasure if he wants it.”

Fourth of July was a beautiful, clear day. Bright and early in the morning Lewis cleaned the carryall, which would hold twelve persons; then he greased the wheels, and ate five of the largest apples that he could find on the tree. I think I see

some of my readers laughing at me and saying that greenings aren't ripe on the Fourth; but the "iron" greenings were. After the boy had eaten the apples he felt his muscles, and they were so hard that he cracked pig nuts on them.

Right after breakfast the picknickers came out and clambered into the wagon. There were three stout old ladies, two fat old gentlemen, three chubby young girls, and four portly young men, besides a huge basket of lunch.

"Don't forget to put in some iron greenings for me," said Lewis, and then went into the barn to get his harness on.

Five minutes later they started. "Be sure to keep strong and be back in time to do the chores," said his father. Lewis trotted off like a young gazelle, and thanks to the five apples under his vest, he soon reached the top, although it was a twenty-mile climb over a rough mountain road.

The picknickers felt well repaid for his efforts. It was a clear day, and sure enough, they could see the sun as plainly as if it had not been 94,999,980 miles away. After they had looked at the sun until their eyes ached, they were ready for lunch.

The rest of the party ate such foolish things as pies and cake and sandwiches, and drank milk; but Lewis sniffed at such things, and ate nothing but five greenings. He knew that they would be sufficient to carry him home with full strength. Poor boy, he did not know that a mistake had been made and that ordinary greenings had been brought up. If you ask how there came to be ordinary greenings on the Fourth, I must ask you not to interrupt me.

Late in the afternoon they climbed into the wagon, and Lewis began backing it down. It was easier than pulling, for there



was no danger of his being run over. He had gone about a mile at a rattling pace when he felt hungry, and his strength left him as quickly as a five-cent piece drops through a hole in your trouser's pocket. He shouted to everybody to jump, but he didn't speak quick enough, and just then the wagon came to a turn in the road and plunged off a sheer precipice seven miles high.

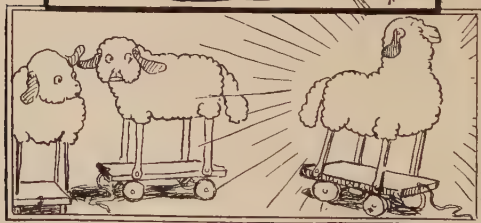
Brave little Lewis sprang upon the dashboard and determined to go down with his party, but he felt that they were all in a ticklish position, and he wished he had chosen his apples himself. He looked above him in desperation, and saw a balloonist who had been making a Fourth of July ascension. He made a megaphone of his hat, and called to the aeronaut to come down and help them. Quick as a flash the good-natured balloonist let out gas and dropped alongside of the descending

## T H E   S T R O N G E S T   B O Y

picknickers, who were beginning to faint from fright. He made the wagon fast to the basket of the balloon, and then they went down easily enough, and in less than ten minutes they had alighted in a meadow about a mile from the house. Then Lewis thanked the aeronaut and ran home to get some apples. After he had eaten the apples he returned and pulled the wagon load of picknickers back to the farm, where he arrived just at chore time.

But after that eventful day Lewis always carried a supply of apples in a bag slung over his shoulders. And if it hadn't been for the kind balloonist, the picknickers would have had a nasty fall. It's no joke to drop seven miles.

THE TOUCH OF GOLD





**W**HEN old Mr. Carpenter died, he left one son, Hugh Carpenter, and that was all he left. His fortune had been swallowed, and Hugh found himself, at twelve years old, fatherless and penniless. He had made good use of his schooling up to that time, and he knew more than some boys of fifteen, but he was hardly prepared to go out into the big world and earn his living. His father had had many friends when he was

rich, but they did not tumble over each other in their efforts to help Hugh to a position, and I don't know but that he would have had to go out and sell newspapers if Calvin Cuthbert, who lived next door to him, had not offered him a position as cash boy in his ten-cent store.

Mr. Cuthbert did not do this because he had a kind heart, but because Hugh's extremity was his opportunity, and he got him to work at just half the wages that are generally paid for the same amount of labor.

The morning that Hugh began, Mr. Cuthbert called him into his private office and said to him : " Hugh, I have done a great deal for you. Your father did less, for he left you poor. I have put you in the way of becoming rich, if you attend to business and come here at 7 in the morning and work hard all day until 6 at night,

or 9 on Saturdays and the Christmas holidays, without extra pay for overtime. You will receive one dollar a week, and I hope that, besides trying to earn it, you will always remember that it was I who saved you from starvation."

Hugh was a simple-hearted boy, and had never been allowed to have much spending money, so that a dollar a week seemed good pay, and he was of so grateful a disposition that he felt he could not do enough to show that he appreciated his neighbor's efforts in his behalf. He was always on time, worked hard at whatever he had to do, and found that by boarding at a cheap place and spending nothing upon foolishness he was only five dollars in debt at the end of the first month. He went to Mr. Cuthbert, and asked him when he could expect a raise. That ben-evolent man was exceedingly angry. "Do you think that I am made of money? If

you had come to work here in the ordinary way by answering an advertisement, I might raise your salary at the end of the year; but as I was kind enough to save you from starving, it will be two years before I think of raising it, and I think a long time before I act. Be thankful that you did not starve a month ago."

"But I have to pay two dollars a week for my board, sir."

"Hugh, I did not hire you in order to hold dialogues with you. I am busy. Get busy yourself."

Hugh felt that Mr. Cuthbert was a good man, but this did not make it any easier to see how he was to pay his landlady, and she could not afford to lodge and board him for nothing.

That morning a tall, thin man, with slanting eyebrows and a black mustache and goatee, came into the store. He was a famous magician, and I dare say that you



have seen him draw forth rabbits and canaries and goldfish from a stovepipe hat. He saw that Hugh looked downcast, and as he was fond of children, he asked him what the trouble was. Hugh told him, and the magician shook his head and said something about Mr. Cuthbert that was not complimentary.

“My boy, I can’t do anything for you unless I give you the touch of gold.”

“What is that?” asked Hugh.

“Why, whatever you touch will turn into gold.”

“And can you do that for me?” asked Hugh, his eyes glistening.

“I can try. Come to the soda fountain.”

Hugh was a little afraid that Mr. Cuthbert would come out and scold him for leaving his post of duty, but he decided to risk it and make it up at lunch time by staying in.

"What'll you have?" asked the magician.

"I'll take vanilla—no, I'll take pineapple—no, I guess I'll take lemon."

"Take all three if you want," said the magician; so Hugh ordered all three. Just before Hugh drank the strange mixture the magician emptied a powder into the glass and passed his wand over it, and it fizzed up much higher than ordinary soda water, and a fountain of parti-colored fire burst from the foam and descended in brilliant sparks upon the marble counter.

"Drink it, my boy. Don't be afraid," said the magician kindly, and Hugh drank it, and pronounced it the best soda he had ever tasted.

"Now pay for it," said the magician.

"I have nothing in my pocket except a button," answered Hugh, quite crest-fallen, and the soda-water clerk looked as if he were going to call an officer.

“The button will do very well, I guess,” said the magician, and Hugh drew it forth from his pocket, and it was pure gold.

The soda clerk was at first afraid to take it, thinking it was brass, but he tested it, and then he wanted to give Hugh change; but the magician said that that was not allowable, and with that he disappeared. He was near the door, and the door was open, so I suppose he went out into the street; but he did it more quickly than I could, and Hugh was astonished and vexed besides, for he wanted to thank the kind magician for the drink and the gift.

Now, it so happened that that morning one of the sales-girls had to go home sick. She had stood for five days selling baalambs and dolls for ten cents apiece, and I suppose she felt like sitting down, and of course the only way to do that was to be sick. For Mr. Cuthbert was upright, and he wanted all his clerks to be upright,

too. So Hugh was put in her place, and told to sell baa-lambs and dolls for ten cents until he dropped, although they didn't word it just that way.

Now he had kept his hands at his sides after paying for the soda, and consequently had turned nothing more into gold. Whether it came by accident or design I can't pretend to say, but it is a fact that he didn't exercise his new power until a woman came in who wanted a baa-lamb for a three-year-old child.

"We're all out of those for three-year-olds," said Hugh politely, "but I have some nice ones for a two-year-old and two sizes larger for four-year-olds."

"I'll take a four-year-old lamb—although I should think it would be a sheep in that case," said the lady, smiling sweetly. There is nothing that makes people smile so sweetly as jokes of their own manufacture.

Hugh smiled, but not as sweetly as the lady, and then he took hold of the lamb, when it instantly became pure gold.

He was now in a quandary. He was strictly honest, and he knew that as they ordinarily were the toys were not worth over ten cents. Nothing in a ten-cent store ever is, else it would not remain a ten-cent store very long. But a gold baa-lamb is, naturally, worth far more than a dime.

Seeing the lamb change color and noticing Hugh's hesitation, the lady said: "Come, little boy, give me my lamb and my change, for I must be going." But he said: "I'm afraid I can't sell you this lamb. If you will pick out another for yourself, you may have it; but I have the touch of gold, and I must not handle the toys unless Mr. Cuthbert wants to change this place into another Tiffany's and I have not talked to him about it yet."

But the lady knew gold when she saw it, and she naturally wanted the greatest bargain in New York, and she began to talk so excitedly that good Mr. Cuthbert came up and said: "Here, Hugh, what is the trouble, and what are you doing behind the baa-lamb counter?"

"I have the touch of gold, sir," said Hugh, "and Miss Dyer was sick, and I took her place, and I've turned this baa-lamb into gold, and so of course it's worth more than ten cents." As he spoke he touched the brass counter rail inadvertently, and it turned into gold in a twinkling.

Mr. Cuthbert was a hard-hearted man, but he was touched at Hugh's honesty. He also saw that the boy was more valuable than his whole force of clerks. He told the lady that she might have the baa-lamb at ten cents if she would tell all her friends. Then he offered to pay Hugh

five dollars a week if he would stay and turn one or two articles on each counter into gold, so that they would serve as an attraction for customers.

Hugh thought the matter over during his lunch hour—for he forgot and took it, after all. “I have nothing of my own,” he argued, “except the clothes on my back, and it won’t do me any good to turn things into gold, for they won’t be worth any more to me than before. Because I turn Mr. Cuthbert’s baa-lambs into golden ones, it doesn’t follow that they are mine. Five dollars a week is a big sum of money, and Mr. Cuthbert gave me a place when no one else would. I owe him all that I can do for him. I will accept his offer.”

During his luncheon Mr. Cuthbert decided that he would offer Hugh six dollars a week and get him to turn everything into gold. He could then sell out at auc-

tion and realize even more than he did on the ten-cent articles. He felt sure that the extra dollar would hold Hugh, for he was a good judge of character.

Now, whether the magician heard of it and was vexed that Hugh did not make more of his golden opportunity, I cannot say; but it is a fact that after the lunch hour Hugh found he had lost his power. He went around touching everything in the place, but he could not make anything worth more than a dime. But although Mr. Cuthbert was close, he was also a man of his word, and having told Hugh that he would pay him five dollars a week, he continued to do so, and Hugh was so diligent that he advanced higher and higher, until at last he was made a partner in the business, and to-day he is so rich and all things he undertakes are so prosperous that people say of him, "He has the touch of gold."



## T H E   T O U C H   O F   G O L D

But if he had not been so mindful of Mr. Cuthbert's interests he might still have the veritable touch of gold that he possessed for one short hour, and I'm free to admit that that would have been far more interesting.



TARKUS AND THE IMITA-  
TION LIQUID AIR





**I**T is a foolish thing to let a boy have just what he wants. Of course there are some boys who never want anything they ought not to have, but they are so few in number that it is not worth while to take them into account. One of the main reasons that boys have parents is that the parents may with becoming firmness refuse to let them have the moon and cigars and a night key and other injudicious things desired of young men

from babyhood up. But Mr. Greenwich was old enough to be a grandfather when his first son was born, and as grandfathers are notoriously easy with children, he let Aristarchus—for such was the outlandish name that he gave the boy—have anything, in reason or out of reason or in season or out of season, that he expressed a wish for.

Now it was about the time that Aristarchus was thirteen that liquid air began to be talked about, and after a while it became possible to buy it in small quantities, with certain restrictions. A man can't rush into a drug store in great haste and say: "Give us a quart of laudanum or strychnine," and get it, you know. The druggist will have a lot of questions to ask. "Do you intend to take it all yourself, or will you share some with your family?" he will say, and, after the intending purchaser has satisfied him that

he does not want it for himself alone, he lets him have it and takes down his name and address.

So it is with the liquid-air shops. The fluid is kept in open bottles—for you can't pen up liquid air safely, and the clerks in charge won't sell a bit until they are satisfied that you are a reliable person with no mischievous proclivities. Then the clerk makes you sign a receipt for it, and after you have paid a hundred and fifty dollars for a pint, two hundred for a quart, two hundred and fifty for a gallon, and three hundred for a peck—if my liquid measure is wrong, it's because I was absent from school with the measles when the class took up liquid measure—I say, after the proper payment has been made, the purchaser is allowed to take the bottle out with many cautions against its improper use.

One day Aristarchus read in a book

that liquid air was as cold as 300 degrees below zero. It so happened that the day was insufferably hot. A few lines further on he read something like "sick rooms may be cooled by the use of liquid air."

He dropped the book, and jumped from the bed where he had been sweltering. "If sick rooms, why not well rooms—any old rooms in fact? I'll make papa buy me a bottle of this air."

Now if Aristarchus's father had been a man of the normal age for a parent—that is, anywhere between twenty-two and fifty-two—he would have said "No sirree" when Tarkus (for by that hideous nickname he was known) asked him for a pint bottle of liquid air. But as Mr. Greenwich was seventy-two, he smiled pleasantly and said: "I'll get you some next Saturday when I come up again." Tarkus and his mother were boarding for the summer up in the country.



The clerk in charge of the store was all out of liquid air, but he had something else "just as good." So if the effects of this fluid are not according to Tripler, it is no fault of the real liquid air. The clerk was in a hurry to shut up shop—it was Saturday afternoon, and he wanted to go to the ball game—and he did not ask Mr. Greenwich a single question or make him sign any receipt. He told him not to drop the bottle, and then followed him out to close the shutters and shut up shop.

Mr. Greenwich hastened to the train, and was soon hurrying up into the country. The cars were so hot that he longed to open the bottle and pour a little air on the floor, but he knew that Tarkus wouldn't want any one to use the air but himself, so he refrained. As soon as he reached the boarding-house, Tarkus ran out to the wagon and said: "Did you get my liquid air?"

“Sh! Yes, I did,” said the old gentleman in a low tone. He must have felt that the other men who had come up to spend Sunday would feel nervous if they knew that Tarkus was to have a bottle of unlimited mischief about his clothes.

There were two or three choice spirits known of Tarkus, and with the bottle resting securely in his hip-pocket, he went forth to find them. They were country boys. There were city boys at the boarding-house, but they were fretful, sickly fellows, and Tarkus avoided them when he could. He found Dick Leonard and Billy Mason out behind the Masons’ barn, smoking corn-silk cigarettes.

“Say, fellers, I’ve got her. Maybe we won’t be hot any more.”

It was intolerably hot. The thermometer was up in the nineties, and the air was damp and muggy—just the day for a moderate application of liquid air. Tar-

kus had read an article about liquid air to the boys, and he supposed that he had a bottle of the real thing.

“What say we do—just get cool or try coasting?”

“Coasting,” yelled Billy; “you forget you’re hot, if you’re coasting.”

The Masons’ pump stood at the brow of a steep hill that ran down in the form of a lane to what they called the “night lot,” where the cows were turned after evening milking.

“Now, you two boys pump for all you’re worth, and I’ll freeze the water until we have coated the whole hill with a sheet of ice,” said Tarkus.

The boys threw away their half-smoked cigarettes, and sprang to the pump. The water poured forth in a copious stream, and trickled down the hill, but not nearly fast enough to suit the boys; so they overturned the drinking trough, which was full

of water. Then Tarkus poured a little of the imitation liquid air out. If it had been the real thing, it would have rolled out like smoke and would not have frozen the water ; but as it was, the water froze solid—so for the boys' purposes the imitation was better than the real article. Then they filled the trough once more and again upset it, and after a while the whole hill was a glare of ice. Then Billy got his double-ripper out of the barn, and with loud cries of joy they coasted down hill on ice in midsummer.

If the affair had ended there, all would have been well and old Mr. Greenwich wouldn't have gotten into trouble ; for the ice would have melted in a little while, the boys would have had their fun, and no one would have been hurt in any way. But Tarkus, instead of putting the bottle in some safe place, carried it in his hip-pocket, and at the fifth or sixth coast he

tumbled off the sled and broke the bottle. In an instant the mercury in that vicinity dropped a hundred degrees.

As bad luck would have it, a summer shower had just begun, and the rain turned to hail in a twinkling. The boys gazed at each other in silence for a minute, and then looked at the fields on either side of the lane. On one side had stood tasseled corn, on the other pole beans, while at the extreme foot of the hill was an apple orchard. They would have waited to see the leaves and the corn and fruit blasted in the bitter cold, but they were afraid of getting blasted themselves. They were freezing, and were almost too benumbed to get up the slippery hill and into Billy Mason's house.

Mrs. Mason, Billy's mother, was putting up tomato ketchup, and the perspiration was rolling from her forehead as she bustled about the hot kitchen, with all the

windows open and the torrid shrilling of the locusts filling the air. To be confronted by three blue-lipped boys, who with chattering teeth told her they were freezing to death, was to make her believe that she had gone crazy. And when she felt their poor numb hands and the coldness of their summer shirts, she was sure of it.

“For the land sakes! Are you bewitched? Where have you been, and what has happened?”

Billy explained that the bottle of liquid air had been broken; but she was as much in the dark as before, for she had never even heard of such a thing as liquid air. Still she knew what to do in cases of frost-bite, and she soon had the boys' hands in basins of cold water and had heated milk for them to drink.

Then she went to the door to see what had happened. The pump was thick with ice, and long icicles hung from its lips.

The hired man stepped up to it at that minute, and the next moment he was coasting on his trousers down the lane, and when he picked himself up he began to rub his ears and put for the house as fast as he could.

In violent contrast to this, she could see people on the piazza of the boarding-house fanning themselves vigorously, while in the hen-yard of the Leonards the hens were walking about with open beaks—a sure sign of unusual heat.

While she stood gazing, there came a sound of an amazed voice from the cow lane, and then Billy's father, his black beard coated with frost, ran in out of the hail, followed by Snip, the collie, covered from head to foot with ice.

"This beats all," said Mr. Mason, slapping his hands. "A blizzard in August. Where's my Pontiac mittens?"

It was a full hour before the liquid air

ceased to act, and by that time the fields in the vicinity of the place where the bottle had broken were covered with a foot of hail.

It didn't take the boys long to recover from their chill, and then they put on warm clothes and went out and had an ice-ball fight. And they yelled to some of the city children to come out and play with them; but the city children shook their heads, and said mamma wouldn't let them. And they probably would have frozen to death.

Of course all the boarders were interested, and several got their toes and ears frosted; and before the ice was melted people began to come from all over the county, for the news had been telephoned everywhere, and toward night a reporter came out from the city, and Tarkus was pointed out to him as the one who had caused the disturbance. Trees coated with ice in August are an unwonted



sight, and many a snap shot-was taken of it all. Tarkus found that the reporter was a chummy sort of fellow, and they became friends at once.

“I’m sorry I didn’t have a gallon of the stuff, for I could have frosted the whole State just as easy and given you lots of pleasant work writing it up. It’s a peachy sight, isn’t it?” said the boy.

“Yes,” said the reporter; “but the joke of it is that it was imitation liquid air.”

“Well, I had just as much fun as if it was real. There wasn’t any imitation about the cold, anyhow.”

And there wasn’t any imitation about the sum that Mr. Greenwich had to pay for several barrels of frozen apples and corn and beans, and he now feels that there are some things that he ought to refuse the boy hereafter. And liquid air, imitation or otherwise, heads the list that he has made out.



AMINADAB SKELCH AND  
HIS FREE LIBRARY





**A**MINADAB SKELCH had a defective moral sense, but you must not blame him for it too harshly. What could any one expect of a boy who, having such a dreadful name as Skelch, had been saddled with Aminadab when he was too young to protest. Of course the boys called him Dab or Dabby for short, or else Amen, which was just as bad, and he is certainly entitled to some consideration on that account. If

he had been called Gaudensius Stewart or Alcibiades Montrose, he might have been a very noble little fellow ; but the name of Aminadab prepared people for the worst. And yet he was not the worst by any means. He had a love for the beautiful, and he liked to do little kindnesses for people, and he was generous to a fault. His chief failing was that he did not know the difference between mine and thine, and it was this that led him into the trouble that I am about to describe.

One day he went to Philadelphia, and while he was there he saw many fine buildings. Now the little town where he lived, up among the mountains near Plainfield, New Jersey, did not boast of a building more pretentious than a wooden house, and so these great stone buildings seemed to him like fairy palaces, and he determined, when he returned to Mullinsville,

to build a handsome library and present it to his fellow townsmen.

It is proper at this point to say that while Aminadab did not boast any acquaintance with the fairies, he did have a strength that was little short of supernatural. He was so strong that he could pull young saplings from the earth with one hand and could raise a six-hundred-pound bag of meal as easily as you could handle a five-pound bag of salt. Beside this he was remarkably handy. He was own cousin on his mother's side to the boy who made a trolley car with a jack-knife as his only tool.

Now, if Aminadab had possessed a good moral sense, he would have gone to the proprietor of some stone-yard and would have said, "I want enough stone to build a very handsome library. I have not the money to pay for it to-day, and I may never have it, but if you will trust me, and

my health does not give out, I will pay you before I die." Most any stone-seller would have given him at least enough for a basement. Then he would have said practically the same thing at the pane-of-glass factory and the store where they sell planks of wood and the nail bazar and the paint depot. But he did none of these things. He said to himself: "Here, I am going to give my fellow townsmen a fine library. I am going to make it all myself, and I don't see why I can't help myself to material wherever I can find it."

Now, as you and I know, this was very wrong; but I'm not telling you what ought to have happened, only what did happen to a little New Jersey boy who didn't know any better.

First he selected a plot of ground on which to build the library. This was next door to the summer residence of a man who had gone to New York for the



winter, and it was part of his land. When people saw Aminadab digging for the foundations, they did not stop him, for it was none of their business, and besides, for all they knew, he had received permission from Mr. Hamerton, the owner. As I neglected to say, Aminadab was an orphan and not answerable to anyone.

Of course, to such a strong and handy boy the work of digging a cellar thirty by fifty feet was not a thing to keep him busy long, and by nightfall of the day he started it, it was all ready for the mason work.

It would not be very interesting to tell you how he mixed his mortar and did all the other prosy things that go to the making of a house. The remarkable thing is that he got every stone that went into the building of that library from the stone walls of the adjacent country. "A stone here and a stone there will never be missed," said he, and he was right. But,

although they weren't missed, it was wrong in him to take them without asking. I'm not standing up for Dabby by any means.

There was a very thick evergreen hedge running along the front of the Hamerton place, and no one noticed what was going on behind it, so Dabby was able to give his whole strength to his task without interruption. And it took a great deal of strength, and the boy ate his meals with a workman's appetite. It was no slight task to carry two or three fifty-pound stones a mile or two, and set them up in place; but he was a cheerful worker, and he knew that he was building a memorial to himself, and that made the task an easy one.

An armful of planks from a planing-mill here and there, taken at the noon hour, when the men were off eating their luncheon, and a few kegs of nails, which he

shouldered two at a time, and some quick, deft work, and the floors were laid. And he had only been at work two or three days. I think he must have had a strong natural taste in architecture, for when the building was completed, several New York architects said that it was worthy of Richardson at his best. You ought to know, if you don't, that Richardson was one of the greatest of American architects, and it is a pity that he is not living to-day.

The panes of glass were harder to get, and I think that the way in which Aminadab got them was thoroughly reprehensible, for instead of buying them or even taking them without leave from a glazier, he stole a glazier's diamond and cut the panes out of the various houses in town thus letting in the cold air and putting people to a lot of trouble. You may say that in the end it gave the glazier plenty

of work that he would not otherwise have had; but I tell you that a right that comes from a wrong is not the right kind of right.

At noon of the fourth day the boy had finished everything but the front doors, and he was puzzled where to get them. He wanted something handsome, but he didn't think that he was able to make doors with the few tools at his command, and he knew of no ready-made doors that would do. So he took a day off and went to Philadelphia, and there, on Market Street, or Chestnut, or Arch—I can't be more exact, because those are the only Philadelphia streets that I know—he saw two mahogany doors, most beautifully carved and evidently very valuable.

Oh, why did not Aminadab ask permission to carry those doors away with him? The owner, who was a rich man, might have granted his request, if the lad

had been courteous. But poor little Aminadab, the boy with the perverted moral sense, went up the steps, and taking a screw-driver from his pocket, began to unscrew the hinges.

In fewer minutes than you can count, a policeman passed by, and when he saw the boy, he asked him what he was doing. Aminadab had taken one door off and leaned it up against the house, and a flood of keen autumn air swept into the rich hall.

Now, whatever else Dabby may have been, he was at least truthful, and he said, without hesitating:

"I am going to take these doors to Mullinsville, to put them in my new free library there. They are just the right size, and I can't make any nearly as good."

"But, my son," said the policeman, who had children of his own and knew how to speak to boys, "don't you know

that it is dishonest to take a man's doors away without his permission? Suppose Mr. Strawcott, or Lippinbridge, or whatever the name of the gentleman is who lives here, should get pneumonia through the loss of his doors, it would be your fault."

Aminadab had not thought of that at all. To give a man pneumonia was the last thing he would have wished to do, and his eyes began to fill with tears. While he was trying hard to keep back the sobs, a large, stout, kindly-looking old gentleman came down the broad staircase, and seeing one of his doors off its hinges and a policeman on the steps, said:

"Hello, what's the matter here? Is this the way you come in doors—by taking the doors off?"

Then Aminadab did what he ought to have done in the first place. He took off

his hat, and he made a low bow, and said, in a manly tone :

“I am building a library at Mullinsville, New Jersey, which I am going to give to the town, and I needed a pair of doors for it, and, seeing that you must be rich, or else you wouldn't have mahogany doors when black walnut would do just as well, I helped myself to them, and didn't suppose that you'd miss them.”

“Didn't suppose that I'd miss them? Hoity, toity! am I so old that I can't see when my front doors are gone? However, I am glad to see that you are so public-spirited, and if you and the officer will come inside out of the draught, I'd like to talk to you.”

Aminadab motioned to the officer to go in, and then he placed the door in position, and put back the screws. Then he came inside, and sat down in the old gentleman's drawing-room.

"Now, see here, young man, where did you get the rest of the material for your library?"

"I got the stone from the stone walls around the country."

"And did you have permission?"

"Why, no," said Aminadab, wonderingly. "What's a stone out of a wall here and there?"

The policeman looked at Mr. Lippinbridge, or Mr. Strawcott, or whatever his name was, and shook his head sadly. To him the boy seemed pretty bad, and if he had had his say he would have carried him off to the police station.

But the old gentleman smiled kindly. "And who helped you take all this stone? Didn't your helpers tell you that it is wrong to steal?"

"I had no help, sir," said Aminadab. "I did it all myself."

"Well, you must be unusually strong.



And how were you going to carry my doors back to Mullinsville?"

"On my back," said Aminadab, simply.

"A young Samson," said the old gentleman, looking over the tops of his glasses at the policeman, who nodded affably.

"And the glass and timber, where did you get those?"

Aminadab told him. Somehow he was not afraid in the presence of this fine, patriarchal old man. He had heard of jails, but he did not believe that the gentleman was going to punish him.

Mr. Strawcott—if that was his name—heard him through, and then he said: "Officer, I don't think that this is a case for you. He has put back my door, and I will deal with him in a way that seems fit."

The officer rose and bowed, and went out.

When Aminadab and the old man were

alone together, the latter said: "My boy, a little fellow who has so much strength of body and such kindly instincts ought to learn that it is never kind to take things that don't belong to him. Now, I believe that you acted thoughtlessly, and I am not going to punish you, although you committed a crime in taking down my door. Instead I am going to make you a present of the doors, and will have them sent out to Mullinsville; and I will also give you ten thousand books to put on the shelves, for a library without books is like cake without sugar. Only first you must go to each man from whom you—er—borrowed material, and tell him what you have done, and restore his property, if he objects. And I will make good any stone or glass or timber that is needed."

Aminadab seized the good man's hand and wrung it, and a few minutes later he was on his way home, and before night-

fall he had visited every man who had unknowingly contributed to the new library. And to the glory of the inhabitants of Mullinsville, only one man refused to let Aminadab keep what he had taken, and that one was an old fellow who had miles on miles of stone fences and from whom the boy had taken only one stone. He insisted on its being returned to him, and as it was the bottom stone in the foundation wall, Dabby had a hard time getting it, and plenty of time to reflect on his misdoings. It is a singular fact that, after the library was dedicated, there was no one who spent so much time in it as this old man who had refused to contribute a single stone towards its erection.

The day of the dedication was made a holiday in Mullinsville, and every one in town came to see what one small boy had been able to do; and old Mr. Strawcott, or Lippinbridge, told them all that they

ought to be proud of Aminadab, on the whole, because while dishonesty was a grievous quality, still it could be repented of and doubtless Aminadab had already repented, but public spirit was a thing so rare that it ought to be encouraged by all possible means.

Then Aminadab got up and said: "I thought that I was going to give you this library myself; but since my kind friend here has opened my eyes, I see that I had only two things to give you, my labor and what taste I may possess. The rest you have given yourselves, and the books he has given. So I say let's give three cheers for him."

The cheers were given lustily, and then, much to Aminadab's surprise, Mr. Hamerton, who had come in late and unexpectedly, rose and said: "Dabby has forgotten that I own the ground on which he built the library, but I cheerfully give it

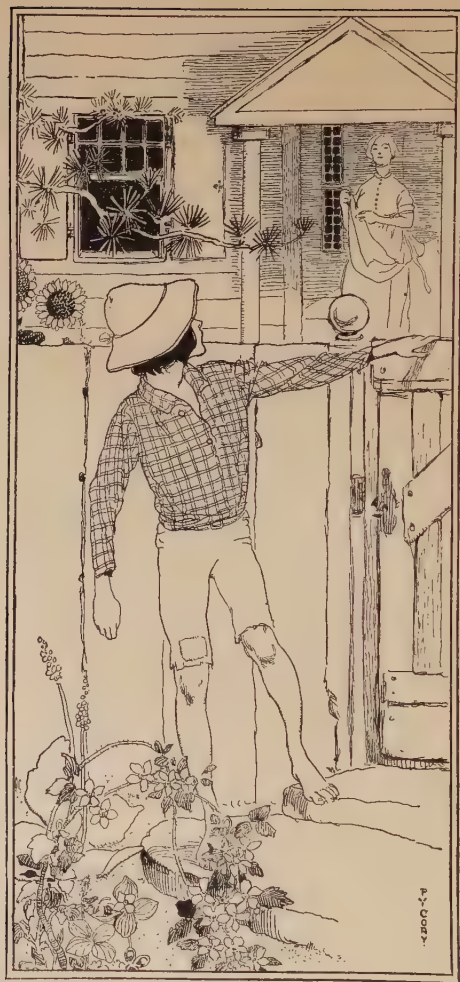
AND HIS FREE LIBRARY

to him to give to you, because I think that he is the most generous and the most public-spirited boy in New Jersey, and after this we will trust him with anything."

And Dabby has proved faithful to that trust.



OLIVER'S THREE GIFTS







**I**T was on a bright morning early in June, that Oliver Westinghouse left his home in Thomaston, Connecticut, to seek his fortune. His mother, poor woman, had nothing to give him but her blessing and three nickels for pocket-pieces.

“Go, my son,” she said, “and remember that, although kind words butter no parsnips, they make your going easier.”

Oliver thanked her and kissed her, and set forth. He paused at the front gate to

## OLIVER'S THREE GIFTS

say: "If I am not back by Saturday with a fortune, it will be because all the fairies are dead."

His mother, who was blessed with a sense of humor, said in return: "Then I'll prepare dinner for but one next Sunday," and with a tearful smile she waved him a good-bye.

This was on Monday morning, and the boy journeyed along with a light heart, jingling the three nickels in his pocket. He had not gone far before he came upon a poor scissors-grinder who was walking along under the burden of a heavy grindstone. Oliver walked alongside of him and said, "Good morning, sir. We need rain."

"Don't say that," said the grinder. "The going's bad enough as it is. It's a weary walk to Waterbury, and I'm half sick of it."

"What's the matter with my carrying

your grindstone for a mile or two? I'm strong and hearty, and I'm on my way to make my fortune before Saturday night."

"You'll need to work fast to get it made on time, my good friend," said the man. "I've been tinkering at mine ever since I was your age, and that's forty years, and it's not nearly made yet."

"Perhaps you were never sure of making it as I am," said Oliver.

"Well, there's something in that," said the old man. "I was never sure of doing well, and I never have. Enough to eat and a place to sleep and weary miles to walk and the everlasting whirr of the grindstone, with my nose pretty close to it, and there you have my history for the last forty years."

They had now come to a farmhouse, and a woman ran out and asked the man to sharpen her scissors. He thanked Oliver for relieving him of his burden, and

as the boy slung the grindstone off his shoulders, the old man fumbled in his pocket and at last brought out a key, which he handed to the lad. "Take this, my boy. It will open any lock if used honestly."

"Thanks," said Oliver, "but you must let me pay for it." The old man smiled, and Oliver handed him one of the nickels, and then bade him a cheerful good-day and skipped gayly along the road to Waterbury.

He listened to the bobolink's tankling notes, and they seemed to say, "You'll surely succeed."

"I believe you," said Oliver, and ran along as briskly as if he had just been let out of school.

He had made some two miles when he came across a peddler whose cart was stuck in a mudhole. His poor horse had not strength to pull the wheels clear of the

mud, and the peddler was trying to coax the animal.

“Good morning. Don’t you believe in the whip?” said Oliver.

“No, my horse will do his best for love of me. He’ll do no more through fear of me.”

“That’s very pretty, and I like you for it,” said Oliver. “But put your shoulder to the wheel is worth a dozen kind words. Come, you take one side, and I’ll take the other, and we’ll put new heart into the horse.”

It was even as he had said. His strong young shoulder and that of the peddler made it an easy matter for the horse to pull the wagon out of the mudhole; and then, the way being down hill, the peddler climbed into the wagon and invited Oliver to do the same, and the horse ambled along at a decent gait on the road to Waterbury.

“What brings you a-tramping?” said the peddler.

“Oh, I’m going to seek my fortune, and I must find it by Saturday.”

“And you have but six days? Why, my boy, I’ve been searching for that very thing all my life, and I haven’t a clue to it yet.”

“You lacked faith then. I’ll go home with a fortune Saturday night, and don’t you forget it.”

“Well, I’ll say this much. You seem willing to stop in your hunt long enough to help others, and so I’m going to give you a little present. It may not be of any use to you, but it may come in handy to guard against savage dogs on the road. It’s a bit of a root that my father dug out of the Black Forest, and it will make the wildest animal friendly to you. It has something of the nature of catnip.”

The peddler broke off a piece from a black root that he took out of his pocket, and gave it to Oliver.

“Thanks, but you must let me pay for it,” said Oliver. He handed the man a nickel, and the peddler accepted it with a smile. He had long ago learned that money honestly come by should never be spurned.

A few miles further on and the peddler turned away from the road to Waterbury, so Oliver pursued his journey alone. His ride had made him glad of a little more leg exercise, and he ran along whistling in a way to make the robins envious.

About three miles out of Waterbury he overtook a charcoal-burner on his way to town with a load of charcoal. The fellow had cut his thumb while whittling a switch, and it was bleeding profusely when Oliver came up. “What’s the matter—cut your thumb?” said Oliver, sympathetically.

"I have, and it's a nasty cut. Haven't any court plaster in your shoes, have you?" said the man to the barefoot boy.

Oliver laughed. "No," he said, "but my mother says that this is just as good," and with that he stepped to a stone wall and picked two or three cobwebs with the morning dew still upon them. "Wrap your thumb up in those, and it will soon heal."

The charcoal-burner followed Oliver's advice, and the flow of blood was staunched.

"Well, woodsman that I am, I never heard of that before," said he. "Where are you going, to Waterbury?"

Oliver nodded, and the man invited him to get into the wagon, and the two rolled speedily along toward Waterbury.

"What brings you this way?" asked the charcoal-burner.

"Going to build up a fortune by Saturday night," said Oliver.



"You must be a master builder, then," said the man. "I've tried to do a little work in that line ever since I was a kid, but this doesn't look as if I'd got much beyond the laying of the corner-stone."

"You don't believe in yourself enough," said Oliver.

"Well, that may be so, and I'm sure I wish you luck. You seem to have time to help others, and that will make them willing to give you a boost. You did me a good turn, and I'm going to let you have something to remember my thumb by." He tugged away at a greasy old wallet, and drew forth a circus ticket. "This was given to me this morning by a feller that used to be in the charcoal business with me, but now he's in the circus that's exhibiting in Waterbury. I'd like to see it well enough, but I'm pretty busy, and you bein' a kid'll like it better'n I do, so you're welcome to it."

Oliver's eyes sparkled. "You're a brick," he said. "But you must let me pay for it," and with that he gave him the last nickel.

The man smiled, but he understood the lad's independence, and accepted the coin; and having reached the outskirts of the city, he turned east, after setting Oliver down at the entrance to the circus. The tents lay white and dazzling in the morning sun, and Oliver felt that his fortune lay within them.

It were inexpedient to tell of all the delights that fell to the boy. Penniless though he was, he was as happy as a king—would like to be; and he roamed around, looking at the wild beasts, fondling the elephant's trunk, and wishing that his mother were along to share his fun.

When he came to the lion's cage he noticed a great crowd around it, and the lion was growling and roaring in a manner

to scare the stoutest hearts. Oliver pushed his way through the crowd, and found that the keeper of the lion had become angry over some slight from the owner of the show, and had left town that morning, taking with him the key of the cage. He had also given the lion something that had aroused all his savage instincts. The beast leaped from end to end of his cage, roaring in a blood-curdling way and trying to break his bars.

“ I’d give a thousand dollars if I could get a lion-tamer this minute ! ”

The trouble with a great many persons who are looking for success is that they don’t recognize it when they meet it, but Oliver was not that kind of person. That is why he immediately said to the proprietor:

“ I’ll go in and tame your old lion if you’ll pay me a good round sum when I get inside the cage.”

The man smiled in very much the same way that Goliath did when David stepped up to him, but he said :

“ I’m a man of my word. Tame that lion, and I’ll give you a thousand dollars and a plot of ground in Bridgeport near the winter quarters of our show.”

Oliver shook hands with the man ; then he took out of his pocket the old key that the scissors-grinder had given him and opened the cage door. The lion gave a mighty bound, and would have leaped through the door, but Oliver held the piece of root to his nose, and in a minute the beast was lying on his back, with his paws in the air, in a delirium of joy. It was some kind of catnip—probably lion-nip—for the king of beasts let Oliver caress him and pat him, and finally sat down in the corner of his cage with the brave boy astride of his back. And purr ! You’d have thought all the cats in New

## OLIVER'S THREE GIFTS

York City were having a purring convention.

The manager was better than his word. He gave Oliver \$2,000 and a deed for a city lot in Bridgeport, and invited him home to dine with him.

The show was billed to stay in Waterbury a week, and during that time Oliver gave daily performances in the cage, always taking care to keep hold of the root.

Saturday night, after the show was over, Oliver took the last train up the Naugatuck Valley to Thomaston. His mother had gone to bed, but she rose and let him in.

"Why, my boy! I didn't expect you," said she. "You'll have to kill a chicken, for I wasn't going to have anything but a cup of tea for my Sunday dinner."

"You should have had as much confidence in me as I had in myself, mother dear," said Oliver. Then he told her that

## OLIVER'S THREE GIFTS

he had been engaged at a princely salary to be lion-tamer-in-extraordinary to the circus.

When he showed her the deed and the two thousand dollars, "For the land sakes!" said she, and fell weeping on his neck.

JIM AND THE GOLD  
SPIRIT



THE CHILD





**J**IM CORBIN'S grandfather had been a miser, which probably accounts for the inordinate love of money evinced by the boy. If he made ten cents picking berries, he hid it away in a hole beneath a loose board in the barn floor, and often after school he would go out to the barn and count his money.

Jim lived with his father in a dingy white house of two stories, near the top of Loudon Hill. His mother had died when

he was a child of three, to the great grief of his father, but Jim only remembered her as a sweet-voiced woman who used to caress him a good deal, but for whom he never felt the love that he always had for his father. Mr. Corbin was a man who would have been content with his lot if he had not had a penny, but Jim was always wishing that he was rich, and he was in a fair way of becoming so, for he never spent a cent if he could help it.

Jim was fond of his father, although he never thought much about it; but he was decidedly fond of his dog, Snip, a black and white setter—or at least it had setter blood in it. When Jim went to register it at the town hall and was asked by the clerk what kind of dog it was, he began: "Its father was a setter and its mother was a collie——" "Oh, mongrel," said the clerk, to Jim's lasting disgust. His dog was no mongrel, if it did have mixed blood,

and he thought as much of the handsome animal as he could well think of anything not connected with money.

One evening after the chores were done he lighted a lantern, and calling Snip, went out to the barn to count his money. He found that he had \$76.78.

“Not so bad for two years’ savings,” said he to Snip. “Oh, but I do wish that I was awfully rich and had lots of horses and carriages and lived in a castle like Judge Perrine’s.”

As he spoke he was startled to see a little man in black, about three feet in height, emerge from under the loose board and take up his stand in front of him. Snip gave a low growl and raised his ruff, but he did not desert Jim.

As for the boy, although he was startled, he did not show it. He grabbed all his money, and replaced it in the stocking which served as his purse.

The little man stared at Jim from under his bushy eyebrows, and said, in a voice that sounded like the clink of gold, "Well, what do you want of me?"

"I don't want anything of you that I know of. I suppose you are a fairy?"

"As to that, I don't know what you mean," said the little man; "but I can give you riches—all you want, if you do as I bid you."

"And what must I do?" asked Jim, rising to his feet and eyeing the man with suspicion.

"Well, you must give a thousand dollars to the poor every day, or your riches will vanish."

"And how much do I get every day," asked Jim. He did not wish to make any foolish promises.

"You'll get two thousand every day, besides a handsome house and barn."

"All right, I promise," said Jim, "al-

though I think it's a good deal, considering."

"Very well, don't forget. The second thing is, you must kill your dog."

"Kill Snip? I guess not," said Jim, patting the dog on the shoulders. Snip looked up at him with a loving glance as much as to say: "You couldn't get along without me no matter how rich you were, could you?"

"Well, it's nothing to me," said the little man, turning to go as he had come; "I don't care whether you are rich or not. Of course, I'd like your dog, but he'll be no use to me until he's dead; so if you don't kill him, you get no wealth."

Jim was trembling all over. He loved Snip. But he loved gold even more. He lifted his hand from the dog's shoulder.

"Well, what is it?" said the little man. "The dog will only live a few years at best, while you have forty or fifty years

before you, and all the wealth that you can wish if you will shorten his life."

This argument decided Jim.

"How must I ki—kill him?" he asked, breaking into a sweat.

"Shoot him," said the little man, as if he was talking about the killing of a partridge.

Jim walked silently out of the barn. The dog rose to go too, but he sent him back. In a few minutes he came back with a shot-gun. He was a capital shot, but it is one thing to shoot quail or marauding crows, and it is quite another thing to shoot a dog who has been as friendly as a dog can be for three or four years of your life.

"When will I become rich?" said he.

"As soon as the dog is dead," said the little man.

The dog had curled up in his absence and gone to sleep, and this made it a trifle

easier for him to shoot him. If the dog had risen and licked his hand, or lifted it with his cold muzzle, Jim would have told the little man to get away with his temptation; but the dog slept soundly, and in a minute he had passed into a dreamless sleep.

Scarcely had the gun ceased echoing when Jim found himself in a splendid barn, with so much to attract his attention that he did not think of the dog. There were box-stalls in which blooded horses pawed the floor impatiently, great hay lofts, a harness room, a carriage room, and running water, and two grooms.

The old man had disappeared, and Jim was glad of it. With a whoop and a bound he ran to the house, and found a marble palace even finer than that of Judge Perrine. He bounded up the marble steps and pressed the electric button, and a servant in livery opened

the door. "Where's my father?" asked Jim.

"In the library," answered the servant, bowing.

As Jim passed a mirror in the hall, he saw that he was dressed like the Hilton boys, who were home from Yale for the holidays; he had always felt that to be arrayed like one of them would be to attain perfect happiness. As it was, his collar cut his neck and his shoes felt tight. He found his father dressed in a tight-fitting frock-coat, and wearing a high collar and patent-leather shoes, and looking as uncomfortable and forlorn as if he had malaria.

"Isn't it great, father?" said Jim, with enthusiasm.

"Is this your doing, son?" said the old man, sadly. "I suppose it is. You've always wished we were rich, and I suppose we are too rich to ever get over it;



but, if I could slip on my flannel shirt and go around in my socks, I'd give all this fancy work and fixings to somebody who had been brought up to enjoy it. I always thought I was pretty contented, but I can't be contented with this."

Jim sank into a seat opposite his father. It was soft and yielding, and he bounced up and down on it boylike for a moment or two before he spoke.

"Yes, sir, I did it, or at least the Spirit of Gold did. We've got to give a thousand dollars a day to the poor, or we'll lose all our money."

"I lost all mine before I was born, and yet I've always been happy. Still, it will be pleasant to help the poor. How did you get it all? By fairy connivance?"

Just then a dog at the farm-house next door howled dismally. Jim's face fell, and he heaved a sigh that you would hardly expect to hear from one so rich.

“I had to pay a big price for it, papa,” said he. “I had to shoot Snip.”

Mr. Corbin rose from his seat. “You shot your dog—our dog?”

“Yes, sir. The man said he wouldn’t live more than a few years, anyway.”

“None of us will, for that matter. But, boy, that dog was your friend. He trusted you. He went to sleep with his head on your feet night after night, sure that you would not hurt him, and he guarded our house after we had both turned in. And you reward him by killing him. Oh, our wealth will do us no good. Get them to give us back our old home and dog again. I’ll never be happy with all this starch and flummery, and no dog to jump on me when I come home.”

During the somewhat lengthy speech of the old man Jim’s face had been getting more and more crimson, and he now rose to his feet and said :

"Father, I don't know what possessed me to do what I did. I don't believe I'll like this kind of life one bit. I'm afraid of getting a spot on my clothes, the carpets seem too nice to walk on, there isn't anything cozy about it, and if I can only get Snip back again, I'll gladly give it all up."

He left the library, and ran out of doors and through the spacious courtyard that had been the old muddy barn-yard, to the barn. He found the place where he had stood when he shot the dog. There was a blood mark on the floor, but the dog's body was gone. As he gazed at it, his father came out and joined him.

"Snippy, Snippy, come back to me. I'll give up all I have to get you back," said Jim.

Never were words more sincere, and they bore instant fruit. Jim's eyes were unconsciously fixed upon the blood spot,

and as he looked at it, it grew large and black, and at last turned into the semblance of a dog, and then at the word "Snip" from Jim it became his old dog.

At the same time the big, palatial modern barn was changed to the old ramshackle one that needed shingling so badly, and instead of ten blooded horses there was only knee-sprung Jessie.

Snip bounded upon Jim and rubbed his honest head against the boy's breast. Old Mr. Corbin stroked the faithful beast's silky ears. Then son and father together turned their heads from side to side as if to ease them after the choking linen collars, and Jim said:

"Good riddance to the money, papa. We have Snip and each other, and what more do we want?"

THE CAKE OF CHARITY





**H**ARRY ADAMS was in the habit of taking long walks by himself in order to become acquainted with his native city, New York. Country boys generally know all the points of interest for miles around their homes, but city children often grow up without knowing much about their town beyond the few blocks that lie in their neighborhood. This is certainly to be regretted in a city like New York, which is full of the most

interesting localities. But Harry knew New York from the Battery to Harlem.

One day he was out walking on Fifth Avenue, which, as you all know, is the most famous street of residences in America. There are few shops on upper Fifth Avenue, and so when Harry passed a bakery at the corner of Sixty-fifth Street, he was much surprised and turned back. He had passed the spot hundreds of times before, but had never noticed the shop. He happened to have some spending money in his pocket, and he went in.

“What sort of cake have you, if you please?” Harry was extremely courteous. He always took off his cap when he met an acquaintance in the street, and he often took it off in the house without being asked to by his mother—and if you have any younger brothers, you will appreciate that statement.

There was a very tall, thin, young



## THE CAKE OF CHARITY

woman behind the counter. She had flaxen hair and pink cheeks and blue eyes, and Harry thought she looked like a doll come to life. The counter was heaped with all sorts of strange-looking cakes of pretty shapes and colors, and all of them were covered with frosting. Cake without frosting is much worse than an egg without salt, and this young woman knew it.

"I have charity cake, malice cake, good-nature tarts, and so forth."

Harry thought the names very amusing, and he bought two of each kind of cake mentioned.

"Are they wholesome?" said he, which was a funny question for a live boy to ask.

"Very," answered the girl, as she wrapped them up in a sheet of pink paper with a beautiful fairy story on one side of it. "If you're stingy, the charity cake will make you generous. If you are cross, the

good-nature cake will make you pleasant ; but the malice cake is not good for children, and if you like, I'll buy it back. I'll give you five cents a cake for it."

As Harry had paid but a cent apiece for the cakes, he was only too glad to sell the malice cakes at a profit of four cents. Boys sometimes develop the trading instinct very early.

After he had sold the cakes, he bought five more malice cakes at a cent apiece, and then she bought them back at five cents apiece, so that he received a quarter for them.

"How do you expect to make any money if you sell your cakes at so much less than you pay for them?"

"I don't wish to make money on the malice cakes."

"Then why do you bake them?"

"I don't bake them. My baker bakes them."

## THE CAKE OF CHARITY

“ But why does he bake them, if you don’t wish to sell them ? ”

“ Because he hopes I will sell them.”

“ And why don’t you sell them ? ”

“ Because I don’t think they ought to be eaten.”

Harry was just going to ask her why she baked them then when he realized that they would go on talking all day long if he did not stop, so he walked out of the shop with his cakes, after bowing graciously to the girl.

He had read “ Alice in Wonderland,” that treasure book for all bright children, and so he thought it was best not to eat any of the cakes himself. He would try them on the animals in the Park instead.

The Menagerie is only a short distance from Sixty-fifth Street, and Harry soon found himself in front of the lion’s cage. The big beast had the toothache, and he was so out of sorts that he was lashing

his tail and growling in a way to inspire awe. Harry went over to him and spoke in a low tone, and the lion stopped his tail lashing long enough to look at him and wink, but he was suffering too much to care for any playfellow. So Harry handed him one of the good-nature cakes, and the lion ate it, and in a moment he had forgotten his toothache and was chasing his tail around the cage.

Harry was pleased to see how the cake worked, and went into the elephant house, where he found one of the elephants eating up a whole peanut without offering any to the other elephants. He spoke to him, and the elephant looked ashamed, but went on crunching the peanut. So Harry gave him a piece of the charity cake and another peanut, which he had picked off the ground. If Central Park were to be deserted ten years by people, birds, and beasts, when they returned to it, they

## THE CAKE OF CHARITY

would find where the menagerie and bear-caves and bird-houses had been—lofty peanut trees would be waving their beautiful green limbs. Don't tell me that peanuts don't grow on trees, for I know better. If chestnuts grow on chestnut trees and walnuts on walnut trees, of course it is reasonable to suppose that peanuts grow on peanut trees.

As soon as the elephant had eaten the cake, he broke open the peanut and politely offered half of it to his companion beast. And the latter grabbed it without so much as a thank you.

Harry had now learned all he wanted to know about the properties of the cakes. He was a little sorry that he hadn't kept a malice cake that he might have given a piece to one of the gentle deer. He was sure that it would have developed the temper of a tiger in a minute. But I'm glad he didn't. There are enough tigerish

tempers in the world without adding to them.

On Fifth Avenue there dwelt a man who was as rich as a king in a fairy book. And he was as mean as he was rich, and wouldn't give a cent to a poor man even on Christmas day. Harry knew him by reputation, and it had always worried him to think that with so many poor people as there were in the city this man should hang on to his money with such tenacity. There's another big word, but if you suppose that I am going to give up big words just because you won't need them for a year or two, you're mistaken. A big word is only made up of several little words, and if you learn a few now, you'll have that many less to learn in the years to come.

This rich old man was as cross as he was mean. He would not let little boys run around in his front yard or play rail-

road in his balconies. He used to make the servants of his servants drive them off. For, although he was very mean to others, he denied himself nothing that money could buy, and he had servants for his servants, so that his servants would have nothing to do but wait on him. Of course Harry never played on his balconies, because he lived in a flat and had a fire-escape of his own to play on; but he did think it hard that the poor little ragamuffins that sometimes sweep down on Fifth Avenue from the side streets could not have a little innocent fun if they wanted to.

Harry wanted to give the old man some of the cake, but how to make him eat it he did not know. That afternoon he waited near the palace of the rich man until his coach and eight came up from his office. He had made his money selling soap, and he rode to and from his

office in greater style than that shown by the President of the United States. He had an opalescent coach drawn by cream-colored horses, and there was nothing on Fifth Avenue that could approach it for elegance.

At precisely six o'clock the rich man drove up to his palace, and three servants in livery dropped from the coach to open the door. Then ten more came from inside the palace with a silken awning upheld on golden poles, which they held aloft so that the great man would not get sunstruck on his way to the house.

Now, Harry had heard that the only way to the old man's consideration was through his vanity. He had invented his soap himself, and had built his fortune up from one cake which he made and sold when he was a boy, and he liked to think that it was the best soap ever sold. Well,



of course, you know that all soaps are the best. If you don't believe it read the pretty advertisements at the back of the magazines.

Harry had a very engaging manner, and when the great man stepped out of his coach, Harry walked up to him, and removing his cap, he said in a tone of excessive sweetness, unmixed with servility: "Mr.—, I have always used your soap, and that is why I am such a clean little boy [which was the truth]. Please take a bit of my cake, which is the only way I have of showing how much I like your cakes of soap."

The millionaire was tickled. The boy had not asked him to give, but to take, and that is always an easy thing to do—for some people. The cakes looked so pretty and so fresh that he broke off a large piece from each one. First he ate the good-nature cake, and he had no sooner done

so than his face beamed with sweetness, and he patted Harry on the head and said : “ My little man, you are a good fellow to be so thoughtful. I never ate such delicious cake. If you will bring me some more to-morrow I will buy it of you—provided you sell it at the wholesale price. Then he took a bite of the charity cake, and in an instant he smote his forehead and said : “ Mercy me, what suffering there is in this city. Bring me my bags of gold, and you, boy, jump in with me, and we will visit the poor and do what we can to relieve them.”

Harry was overjoyed. He jumped into the coach. The servants, who were too astonished to speak, hurried out with bags of gold until the floor and the front seat were piled up with them.

Then the millionaire told the coachman to go where Harry wished, and as the boy was familiar with the quarter of the city

where alms were most needed, they were soon speeding down town.

As they came near to the squalid portion of the town, the old man's face glowed with sweetness. "To think that I never realized what I could do with my money before," said he. "This is better than making soap or selling it, for it will be making happiness—by wholesale. Won't it, my boy?" said he to Harry.

"Yes, sir," said the lad, and, strange to say, his eyes glistened, although he was anything but a cry-baby.

Then Harry developed a new power. He found he could tell at a glance who deserved help and who did not. All the evening they drove from house to house, and Harry distributed the money until the last bag was emptied and the last woman had murmured her thanks.

And if they had done nothing else, the spectacle of the beautiful horses and the

## T H E   C A K E   O F   C H A R I T Y

gorgeous coach would have been a good one for the poor people, who seldom saw anything finer than a junk wagon in the way of an equipage.

The beautiful thing about the cakes was that this effect never wore off. The elephant to this day divides his peanuts with his companion. The big lion is still good-tempered. And the old man and Harry rode around New York night after night until there was not a worthy poor person in the city who had not been helped. But I think that if the old man had given them all tickets to the country, and a small piece of ground when they got there, he would have done better yet.

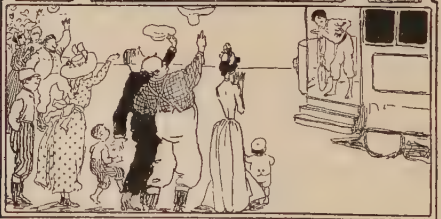
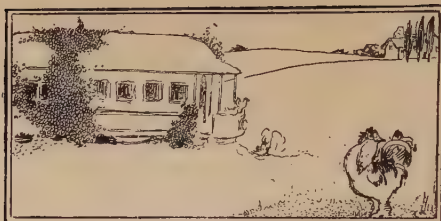
One day I met Harry, and I asked him why he didn't try to get a piece of cake that would make it impossible for people to be poor and miserable, and he immediately ran off to the bakery to try and find some. But there was no bakery there.

## THE CAKE OF CHARITY

If he had ever had a chance to get such cake, he had lost it. He thought that the shop-keeper had moved somewhere else, but I think she had given up business. No one can buy at a heavy loss and be successful, and those malice cakes were her ruin.



THE BOY WHO MADE A  
TROLLEY CAR







**G**EORGE STARBUCK had always lived in the country, which was the best thing that could have happened to him. Have you ever thought, you city child, how little chance you have to become great or famous? You may become rich, but the chances are that you will never be President, and all because you were unfortunate enough to be born and brought up in the city.

You have been taught to laugh each

week at the poor countryman who is pictured in the comic weeklies as a sort of cross between a monkey and a sharper, but the countryman learned what neighborliness meant when he was a boy, and you will never know its meaning unless you leave the crowded city before it is too late. Go up into the country and learn to be neighborly and self-reliant, and you may get into the history books; and future little boys will have to learn all about you as you have to learn about George Washington, and General Grant, and Daniel Webster—all country boys.

George Starbuck lived at Graytown, near Worcester, in Massachusetts, and he could make anything that he had ever seen. At seven he made a wagon, whitening the wheels out of soft pine wood, and his father rode in it a half hour before it fell to pieces and broke his leg.

So when Mr. Starbuck took George to

## THE BOY WHO MADE A TROLLEY CAR

Boston and showed him trolley cars, or "electrics," which is the absurd name they give them there, George said :

"I'll make one when I get home."

Remember, he was only thirteen. But make one he did. How he knew what kind of timber to use passes me, but at the end of a week he called his father out to his workshop, which had formerly been a wagon shed, and there was a trolley car, life-size, and for all the world like one of those that run out to Cambridge and Arlington.

Mr. Starbuck was delighted.

"What are you going to do with it, my son?" asked he.

"Well, I had some thoughts of selling it," said George ; "but, after all, money is not everything, so now I think I'll take you and mother and a party of neighbors down to Boston in it; and when I get there, the neighbors can go sight-seeing,

and I'll make enough money running it to raise the mortgage that is on this farm."

When you grow up, you will find that farmers raise a great many things on their farms, but that mortgages are sometimes very hard to raise ; but it is a heap of satisfaction to raise one. So, you see, George was a good boy to answer his father in that way.

"There's no time like the present for things that are pleasant," said Mr. Starbuck ; so they decided to take the trolley to Boston the very next day. Now, you may have taken the trolley to Boston yourself—but not in the way they took it—on a platform car.

They invited their neighbors to come early next morning and start with them for Boston, and twenty accepted the invitation. George and his father and mother ran the heavy trolley car upon a low-hung

## THE BOY WHO MADE A TROLLEY CAR

wagon that they used when they wanted to carry plate-glass to market, and then the neighbors and all piled into the car, and George hitched a pair of cattle—which is country for a yoke of oxen—to the wagon, and they were drawn down to the station with ease. It was, of course, easier to take the car off the wagon than to put it on. They started the willing oxen home, sure that they would find their way by themselves. Then they all sat down in the car to wait for a freight train to come. In a few minutes a freight train stopped to unload some empty milk cans, and George removed his cap, and politely asked a brakeman if he would help him put his trolley car upon a platform car, as he was going to take it to Boston. The brakeman had been born in the country, and that made him willing to be helpful; so he jumped down and signaled the engineer not to start, and then, after the

neighbors had all gotten out of the trolley he, with the help of the Starbucks, put the car upon the platform car. Then George and his parents and all the neighbors stepped inside of the car, and the train started for Boston.

Pretty soon the conductor, who was a city-bred man, came along and asked them for their fare.

George's feelings were hurt, and he said : "Why, why should we pay any fare? I am taking my parents and some neighbors to Boston in my own trolley car. I will pay you freight for the car, but not one cent for car fare."

The neighbors all cheered these noble words, which sounded very much like the famous sayings of famous men, and the conductor was covered with confusion, and left them to enjoy their trip. In a few hours they ran into the freight yards at Boston, and then the pleasant brakeman

assisted the three to place their car upon a trolley track, and their journey was ended. You may wonder why the neighbors did not assist. They wanted to the worst way, but George said :

“No ; this is a holiday trip, and I don’t want you to feel that you have any chores to do. Mother and father and I will do all that is necessary, and you must have as good a time as you can, and meet me here at twelve to-night, for I expect to go back then.”

The neighbors gave him three times three and a tiger ; but as he didn’t know know what to do with a tiger in Boston, he gave it back to them, and they went away with it.

George fitted the trolley to the overhead wires, and his mother turned on the current and then took her seat inside, and Mr. Starbuck acted as motorman, and they glided up Summer Street as if they

had always done it. I think that George is deserving of a good deal of credit for having made so big a vehicle in a week with no tools but a jack-knife and a scythe.

At Arch Street they were hailed by a man who was standing on the corner. Mr. Starbuck stopped at once. This naturally puzzled the man on the corner, because as a general thing a trolley car does not stop for passengers. As soon as he stepped on board he asked George, who came around for his fare, why the car stopped.

“Why, this is father’s first trip, and he doesn’t know the ropes very well. He thought it would be easier for you to get on the car if it stopped. The fare is ten cents, for you see this is really my private car, and I’m trying to raise the mortgage on father’s farm.”

The passenger, who had been born in



## THE BOY WHO MADE A TROLLEY CAR

the country, paid the ten cents at once, but he advised George to stick to the usual five cent fare. "For," said he, "most of these people are city bred, and they won't care a snap about your mortgage. They are not neighborly enough."

This was the first time that George had heard that city people were not neighborly, and it grieved him. But the car soon filled up, and even at five cents a head he had a pocket full of nickels. He went out on the front platform, and said to his father: "I guess we can go back to-morrow with the mortgage raised."

Then his mother came out and joined them. They were going through the shopping district, and could not move any faster than a mile an hour, because there were so many women crossing the tracks to go to the shops.

"Look here," said Mrs. Starbuck to George, "there's no use letting these peo-

ple ride far for five cents. It's a private car. Why not call out 'change cars,' and then fill up the car with new passengers?"

I fancy that Mrs. Starbuck had a little city blood in her. George was a dutiful son, and he immediately stepped to the door of the car and yelled: "All out!" and the passengers scrambled out like a flock of sheep, and he was free to fill the car up again. Only the first passenger stayed in, and he said: "That was a clever move." So George said he might ride all day long if he wanted to, and, although he was very busy, he did ride all day long, because such chances don't come very often.

Along in the afternoon they were passing the Hotel Vendome, and the neighbors came out and hailed the car, not recognizing George. They had been sight-seeing, and they had all registered at the hotel in hopes of seeing their names in the

newspapers. Of course George would not let them pay a cent, and, as they nearly filled the car and rode way out to Brookline, he didn't make much money that trip. But he left them at Brookline, and ran back quickly to the shopping district, where he soon made up a load.

One time a stout, prosperous-looking man got upon the car and asked George what line he belonged to. George told him politely that it was a little line of his own.

Then the prosperous-looking man, who said he was the president of one of the leading car lines, quoted the famous words of General Grant, and said :

“Do you propose to fight it out on this line all summer?”

“No, sir ; as soon as I raise the mortgage I am going to take my car home and make a hen-house out of it.”

“Are you a country boy?” asked the man.

“I am, sir,” said George, proudly.

“Run all you want, my boy. I give you permission. I was once a country boy myself, and if you can make an honest penny out of these people, you deserve to raise your mortgage. Only you must give me a dollar to pay for your license.”

George handed him the dollar, and he got off the car. And now I must tell you that the man was not president of any company, but simply a bad man who saw a chance to make a dollar out of simple-hearted George. But George was rewarded, as a big theatre party boarded the car and rode five blocks to the theatre. And when they left, he counted up his money, and found that he had just enough to raise the mortgage.

It was eight o'clock, and as none of them had had a bite to eat all day, he ran

## THE BOY WHO MADE A TROLLEY CAR

the car off on a siding, and they took dinner at the Parker House, where they had Parker House rolls and maple-syrup.

After dinner they went back to the car, and found it full of street boys. "Want a ride?" asked George, and the street boys shouted yes; so George took them all over the city for nothing. But I am sorry to say that the boys were rude enough to ask him whether the car wasn't home-made, and this so incensed Mr. Starbuck that he drove them all out.

But by this time it was nearly twelve o'clock, so they ran down to the freight yard, and were lucky enough to find the same brakeman there. The neighbors had come, too, all tired out and loaded down with handbills and samples of different foods, for they had been to a food show at the Mechanics' Institute. They reached Graytown early in the morning. The faithful oxen had come down to meet

## THE BOY WHO MADE A TROLLEY CAR

them, and this time all the neighbors helped to lift the car on to the wagon, so it made it easier.

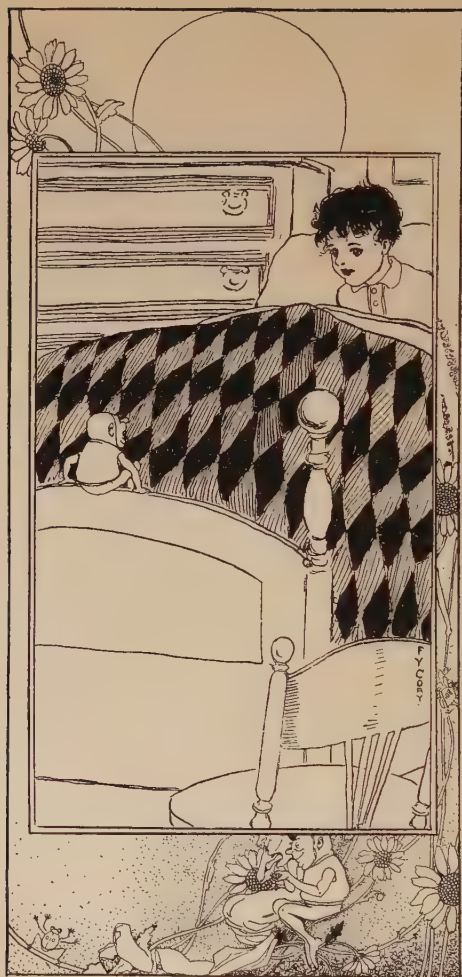
Then when they reached the Starbucks', George raised the mortgage as high as he could, and they all cheered and cheered, and told him they had never had so good a time in their lives, and they hoped he'd have many happy returns of the day.

Then George put the trolley car into the hen-yard, and the hens took to it at once.

As for George, he became a simple country boy once more. But if he had been a city boy, he would have run that trolley car into the ground.

But there is not a city boy in the United States from Portland, Maine, to Portland, Oregon, who could have built a trolley car inside of a week, inside of a shed, with a jack-knife and a scythe.

CYRIL AND THE GNOME







THERE was not a doubt about it, the post-box on the lamp post at the corner was bewitched. The people in the vicinity were most of them writers and wrote the loveliest stories that you ever read, and they always posted them in the post-box on the corner, and had done so for years; indeed, some of the very loveliest stories had been posted twenty times in that same box. How they ever came back had often

puzzled the letter-box, who was of an inquisitive turn of mind, but they were certainly posted about once in so often.

That was before the box was bewitched. Now no matter how many stories and poems and riddles and charades were dropped into the aperture, not one could be found when the postman made his rounds. The box was always empty. At first people thought that it was thieves, and a man was placed at the opposite corner to look as if he was just passing by ; but although he stood in that attitude for one whole hour after a particularly large batch of literature had been dropped into the box by at least six different writers, and although he watched that box as carefully as a sleepy man could, yet not a soul opened it. But when the postman came around, it was perfectly empty. Perhaps I have not been explicit enough, if you know what that means. Letters posted

in the daytime were not lost. It was only after dark that the bewitchment took place.

Now, there was one writer who never wrote anything but fairy stories, and she had a son about ten years old who knew that there were fairies. He pitied children who said with a lofty air, "Oh, yes, when I was a kid I believed in fairies, but I found out long ago that there were none." He used to say to these superior boys and girls: "How do you know there aren't fairies? The world is a large place, and there are many nights when you sleep from eight until seven next day. How can you be sure that the fairies do not hold revels somewhere at night? And if anywhere, why not in New York?" And then the others would say: "Oh, we don't want to argue. Believe in fairies if you want to, and play with blocks and dolls, too; but we're beyond such things."

Well, now, for my part, I'm going on sixty, and yet I wouldn't say there are no fairies, because what would become of the beautiful and authentic history of Cinderella if it were proved that fairy folk were imaginary? No, there are fairies, depend upon it, and if we haven't seen them it's our misfortune. I never saw the Cape of Good Hope, but I'm sure it's around somewhere.

This is a good deal of talk, it seems to me, and nothing at all about that post-box. Well, Cyril Merton, who believed in fairies, was sure that a gnome was in the box, and that he was living on letters. He said nothing to any one, but one night after he had gone to bed and all the house was quiet, he arose softly and dressed himself, and left his room by means of a rope which he had concealed there that day. Then he went to the post-box.

He had small, delicate hands, and he

put one in the aperture and felt for the letters. There was not one. Then he posted an envelope containing nothing but blank paper, and putting his ear to the opening, he listened. He could distinctly hear little jaws champing and paper being torn. He was now perfectly sure that there was a bad little fairy inside the box. So he put his mouth to the aperture and said:

“Little gnome, little gnome, come from within;  
To eat up the letters is surely a sin.”

I don't say that the gnome would have minded you or me or any of those children that don't believe in fairies, but I do know that as soon as the gnome heard Cyril's voice he oozed out of the aperture and sat himself down cross-legged on the top. He was about the size of a squirrel, and wore a tight-fitting suit made of woven grasses of different shades of green. A little bit of the envelope of the letter that

Cyril had posted was sticking to his lip, but the rest was evidently eaten.

Cyril came to business at once. He said: "Don't you know, little gnome, that you're making trouble for a great many people? Most all who live around here write stories, and they get their living by selling them. If you eat all their stories, after a while they won't have any money to buy food and clothes, and then they will all starve."

The little gnome grinned, and began to whistle—the faintest, highest whistle you ever heard. "I don't care for people," he said, finally. "People are never kind to me. I'm after a story; that's why I eat the letters. You see the king of the gnomes has offered the hand of his daughter in marriage to the gnome that can tell the best story; so I've been eating these letters steadily for a month now, in hopes of learning one; but I don't seem to get

one in my head—only in my mouth—and I'm afraid that before I learn one some other gnome will step in ahead of me and marry the princess. She's a beautiful creature, as green as a katydid, and her eyes are as red as fire."

Cyril felt like laughing at the idea of learning a story by eating the paper on which it was written, but he was too courteous to do so. He said: "Now, Mr. Gnome, you've gone about this business the wrong way. You've eaten up a lot of valuable manuscripts, and they haven't done you any good at all; but I can teach you stories just as fast as you want to learn them, if you'll come up to my house any night."

The gnome showed his delight in his little green face. "Oh, I'll come all right, only I don't want you to have a crowd there to look at me. I'm not fond of human beings. You're the only one that

was ever civil to me, and I won't forget it."

"Come on now," said Cyril; so the gnome jumped to the pavement, and skipped along beside Cyril, whistling in his tiny, shrill way, and they soon came to the rope hanging from the window.

"Here, don't try to climb that," said the gnome, as Cyril twisted the end around his wrists and swung himself off the ground. "I know a way worth two of that. Put your foot on my head."

"I'm afraid of hurting you."

"Put your foot on my head, I say," said the gnome, in a tone that invited obedience. Cyril placed his foot upon the little man's head, and felt himself rise to his window as if he were floating on a bit of dandelion down. By the way, why do they call it dandelion down when it's up most of the time?"

When Cyril and the gnome were in the



room, the former threw himself upon the bed, and the latter sat upon the foot-board.

"Now, tell me a story that will please the king."

So Cyril told him "Puss in Boots," and he was delighted.

"Say, did you make that up?" said he, when Cyril had finished.

"No; it's older than we are," said the boy. You see he knew a good deal.

"Not older than I am," said the gnome, decidedly. "I'm going on a thousand and two."

"Phew!" said Cyril. "You don't anywheres near look it."

"I don't feel a day over nine hundred, but then all my family are very young feeling. My grandfather is four thousand, and you'd never take him to be over three thousand, seven hundred. It's because we're very particular not to let the

sun shine on us. I've never seen the sun in my life. But I had a cousin who followed the human's proverb, 'Early to bed and early to rise,' and the sunshine shriveled him up so that he looks hundreds of years older than he is. He used to go to bed at seven in the evening, and get up at six in the morning, and we all go to bed at three in the morning and get up at eight in the evening."

Cyril looked at his clock. It was five minutes to three.

"I'm sorry to hurry you," he said, "but if that's the case, you'd better be going."

"Well," said the gnome, "I thank you for the story, and you may depend upon it I won't eat any more of those inky old letters. They didn't taste good a bit, and if I hadn't loved the king's daughter very much, I wouldn't have eaten one."

“Come again to-morrow ni—” began Cyril, but the gnome had vanished.

He waited a week, but the little imp did not come back. On the other hand no more letters were lost, and the writers were so encouraged that they wrote an unusual number of beautiful stories, and I dare say you may read some of them in the magazines before long.

Cyril knew that it would be foolish for him to tell his neighbors that he had caught a gnome eating their letters, because they were not enlightened enough to believe him ; but he did tell his mother, and she said :

“Well, I suspected as much. I knew no thieving letter-carrier could have gotten away with them.”

“But he didn’t come back,” said Cyril, half crying, “and he said that he was going to tell me how the king liked the story he had learned.”

"Give him time, my dear," said his mother. "I take it as a good sign. If the story hadn't suited, he would have been back for another. I dare say that he is busy getting ready for his marriage."

And that night the gnome proved that Mrs. Merton had guessed right, for after Cyril had been sleeping some hours, he was awakened by a breath of cold air upon his face, and opening his eyes, he beheld the little gnome sitting upon the pillow by his side.

"You're a brick!" were his first words to Cyril.

Cyril was wide awake in an instant, and he said: "So the king liked it?"

He jumped out of bed the better to listen. As for the gnome, he leaped to the foot-board and crossed his knees in the drollest way imaginable.

"Like it?" said he. "Why, I thought he'd never stop laughing. He said that

it was the best story he'd ever heard, and he gave me his daughter's hand as he had promised, and I've been so busy getting ready for the wedding that I haven't had time to come before. You see, I had to engage a big orchestra of crickets and katydids and frogs and locusts, and I had to go to Japan for them, because the best insect musicians are Japanese. It takes time to go to Japan even the way I travel—on a moonbeam. We're to be married to-morrow night, and I've brought you a piece of wedding cake and a present. Only don't eat the cake until to-morrow, or it will make you dream. And now I must be going as it's most three o'clock."

Cyril got up and shook hands with the little fellow, sincerely sorry that he was going.

"Just think," said the gnome, "if you hadn't come that night, I should still be eating those horrid, inky old manuscripts

## CYRIL AND THE GNOME

and never getting any story at all for the king. Oh, I wish you could see the princess. She's a young little thing—only two hundred, but she's so pretty. Well, I must be going. Here's the cake, and here's a pin to remember me by. It's an emerald made out of a real katydid. Bye bye."

And the gnome vanished.

In the morning Cyril found a piece of toadstool on his pillow. That was the wedding cake. He did not eat it. But he has the emerald pin to this day.

THE BUBBLE BOY







**G**EORGE TRUESDELL had been a naughty boy. His mother had said that as soon as his father came home he was to be punished. George sat in his little attic room, and looked anxiously out of the window for his father's coming.

Mr. Truesdell had gone to town with a load of cabbages—he was a farmer—and George knew that when he came home and heard that he had been naughty, he

would tell him sorrowfully, but firmly, to go out into the woodshed and—he hated to think of what would follow. After that the skies would be clear; but that little five minutes was what bothered him. “I wish I had a twin brother who didn’t mind a licking, and then, when I cut up, papa’d attend to him and think it was me.”

What is that speck rising out of the birches, southeast of the road? Is it a cow? No, it looks like a bubble as large as a pumpkin and of all the colors of the rainbow. Then a gust of wind blows it into the room. It hits the window-shade cord as it passes it and bursts, and, presto! there stands a little fellow the exact counterpart of George.

“Hello,” said George, “who are you?”

“I’m a boy that loves to be punished. I love hard work, I love to study, I love to be sent to bed a half hour ahead of time——”

“Why, then, you’re the fellow I’m looking for,” said George, impulsively, “because I hate all those things. What’ll you take to live up here and get punished for me and do all my hard work?”

“I’ll do it for my board and keep.”

“Bully for you. What’s your name?” said George.

“Better call me George as long as that’s your name. I’m only two minutes old, and I hadn’t thought of a name. But you understand that your folks are not to know that I’m here. Whenever I’m needed, you’ll hide and I’ll take your place. The rest of the time I’ll stay up here, and hide under the bed if anybody comes into the room.”

“But won’t you be hungry and want exercise?”

“Oh, I’ll exercise at night, and you can smuggle food up to me. I won’t need much.”

Just then George looked out of the window and saw his father driving home in the ox cart. His "Gee, haw" floated through the calm of the October afternoon in a drowsy tone. But George knew that the tone would be anything but drowsy when his father learned that he had been naughty, and he groaned aloud.

"What's the matter?" asked his double, the bubble boy.

"Oh, I've been bad, and papa's going to flog me."

"Oh, let me be flogged instead. You don't know how I long to feel a little pain. I think I'll like it as much as you like pie."

George looked at him in astonishment.

"You're a queer fellow. It doesn't seem exactly right, but papa won't know the difference, and I'm sorry I was naughty; so you may go down and get punished, and I'll stay up here."

A few minutes later Farmer Truesdell

drove his team into the barn-yard, and un-yoked the oxen, leaving them to wander off down the lane. Then he came into the kitchen, where his wife was preparing dinner.

"Hello, Molly. Sold 'em all early. People seemed hungry for cabbages to-day. Those medicine Indians was on the flat, and I bought a bow an' arrow for George. He's be'n pesterin' me for one, an' seein' to-morrow's his birthday, I bought 'em. Where is he?"

Mrs. Truesdell shook her head.

"He's up in his room, where I sent him. He's been very trying to-day. He teased Cynthia, and when I scolded him, he was impertinent to me. And then, to cap all, he broke the pantry window, throwing stones at the chickens, although I told him not to."

Mr. Truesdell put the bow and arrow into the north pantry.

“ I don’t know what gets into that boy sometimes,” said he. “ I suppose I’ll have to flog him.”

“ Don’t be too hard on him,” said his mother.

“ Floggin’ was good for me, and I guess it’s good for him. I won’t be any harder than’s necessary, an’ when I’m done, it’ll be all over as far as I’m concerned.”

Seth Truesdell went to the foot of the attic stairs and called :

“ George ! ”

“ Yes, sir.”

“ Come down.”

“ You go,” said George, and his double went gleefully down the stairs.

George took up his station at the window, where he could command a view of the wood-shed. But first he locked the door, for fear his mother might come up and find him.

The double walked into the kitchen.

“My boy,” said Mr. Truesdell, “I’m sorry to have to punish you when I come home, but your mother tells me that you have been impertinent and disobedient, so come out into the woodshed.”

George’s double, with never a word, walked out to the woodshed. Mr. Truesdell took a birch rod down from its resting-place on two nails, and told the boy to hold out his hand. Up in the window George was staring wildly and breathing feverishly.

Ssswish ! came the rod. Phew, what a resounding thwack ! George heard it distinctly. He would have cried out, but his double never winced. Four cuts of the rod, and then the double flung his arms around Mr. Truesdell’s neck and hugged him.

“Thank you, thank you,” said he. It had been a pleasure to him. “As good as pie,” as he had told George.

Mr. Truesdell was somewhat surprised at this outburst, but he was of an affectionate disposition and loved George dearly, and he was overjoyed to think that the boy could take his punishment in so good a spirit; so he returned the caress.

Then the Bubble Boy went into the kitchen and kissed Mrs. Truesdell, and said: "I'm sorry I was naughty."

She had half repented having told her husband about George's misdemeanor, and she patted the boy's shoulder and kissed him, and said:

"Well, I'm sure it won't occur again."

According to schedule, he should now have gone upstairs to relieve George, who was wondering what was keeping him; but this Bubble Boy was having too good a time to go up into the hot little room. He saw cake and pies, and he smelt a good chicken dinner cooking, and as he



had never eaten in his short life, he determined to stay and have something.

“Dinner most ready?” asked he. “I’m awful hungry.”

“It’ll be ready in ten minutes,” said his mother.

Mr. Truesdell had gone out to feed the hens, and the double sat down by the kitchen window and sniffed longingly at some apples.

“’N I have ’napple?” said he. He seemed to have mastered small-boy dialect in a surprisingly short space of time.

His mother—she thought she was his mother, although, as we know, he had no mother—gave him an apple; and when dinner was served soon after, he ate three times as much as George ever did, and was so jolly withal that Mr. and Mrs. Truesdell didn’t know what had come over their boy.

“George, after dinner I wish you’d har-

ness up Jack," said the farmer. "I've got to drive over to Mr. Gage's to get a book on hens that he promised me. I'm going to give you some hens and let you see what you can make out of them with the aid of the book. I don't take much stock in hen-books myself. I've always made 'em lay without any book, and I don't believe but what hens laid before the first book was printed; but I'll give you something to be interested in, and you won't be so apt to break windows if your time is more occupied."

The Bubble Boy smiled, but said nothing. He was too busy with his third slice of pumpkin pie to talk. After he had finished it, he said :

"Can I ride over with you?"

"I dunno. Kinder late for you. Well, seein' to-morrow's your birthday, I'll let you."

So it happened that a few minutes

later George, who had been weeping in his room, not daring to go down and expose the trick he had played upon his father, and yet feeling very hungry and contrite, heard a sound of wheels in the yard and looked out of the window. There in the dusky light he saw the Bubble Boy backing Jack into the Concord wagon. He worked like an old hand, and in a few minutes George's father came out of the house and got into the wagon, and then they rode off, his double driving.

This was too much for the poor boy. If there was one thing he liked before another it was a ride with his father, and at night of all things. He cast himself upon the bed, and sobbed as if his heart would break. What a wicked boy his double was! Here he'd offered to board and keep him to take all his troubles off his shoulders, and he was taking his pleasures

as well. Oh, how hungry he was! Cold chicken would taste good.

He rose from the bed, and walked as noiselessly as he could down the attic stairs. But his mother, who was putting Cynthia to bed, heard him, and called out in an alarmed tone:

“Who’s there?”

“It’s me,” said George in a weak voice.

“You back so soon? Why, what’s the matter?” seeing he’d been crying. “Has anything happened to your father? Tell me, child!”

“I didn’t go with papa,” sobbed George. “That’s why I’ve been crying.”

“Why, George, I saw you go,” said his mother.

“It wasn’t me; it was a bubble boy that floated in this afternoon.”

His mother looked bewildered. “What’s the matter with you? Are you crazy?” said she.

At this moment the sound of wheels was heard in the yard, and George said : "There they are. They'll be in in a minute."

In less than a minute his father came in. "Oh, here you are," he said to George. "You ought not to jump out of the back of the wagon that way in the dark. I stopped and called to you, and you didn't answer, and I thought you were hurt. And then I saw you running toward the house."

"That wasn't me ; that was the Bubble Boy."

His father didn't notice what he said. "Where's that hen-book ? I want to show your mother that picture of the Wyandotte."

"What hen-book ? " asked George, mystified.

For the next few minutes his answers were so bewildering to both parents that

they finally told him sharply to go to bed.

“It doesn’t do to keep a growing boy up late,” said his father.

As for the double, they wouldn’t hear another word about him.

George went upstairs by way of the pantry, and appeased his appetite somewhat. When he entered his room, he half expected to see his double. But, as we all know, bubble boys have short lives. He looked out of the window. A silvery moon was riding through steamy clouds, and he thought he saw an iridescent bubble floating by its side.

“I guess I’ll take my own punishments and my own pleasures after this,” said he as he took a bite of drumstick. “I know I don’t want any more mean old doubles like that one.”

THE RABBITS' EASTER  
EGGS







**A**USTIN McKENZIE had two sisters, both of them as pretty as Easter lilies, and almost as white, which was strange, as they lived in the country and spent a good deal of time out doors.

Austin had spent an Easter vacation in the city, and when he came home, he gave the girls such a vivid account of the decorated eggs, and the papier-mâché rabbits, and all the other Easter favors that can be

seen in the shops, that they were wild to have him decorate some eggs for them when next Easter should come.

Mr. McKenzie owned a score of hens of various breeds, and Austin, who could draw and paint, asked him whether he could have all the eggs that were laid the week before Easter, so that he might decorate them, and Mr. McKenzie readily consented, as he was proud of his boy's talent.

Austin counted on about a hundred eggs; but, to his dismay, the hens stopped laying just one week before Easter. Now, April is the greatest month in the year for eggs, and this action on the part of the hens was quite unaccountable, and in the minds of Marian and Sarah quite unpardonable.

Austin asked whether they could not buy some eggs; but Mr. Austin was opposed to this, and besides, all their neigh-

bors had their regular customers for eggs, who took all that were laid.

Austin was greatly disappointed. He had a good deal of talent in drawing and painting, and he had anticipated making pretty and quaint designs on the eggs. A hen that can lay and won't lay should be made to lay ; but it takes several days to do this, and it was Good Friday before Austin gave up all hope of the hens beginning, and then it was quite too late to do anything in the forcing line.

He went out to the hen-house to feed them early Saturday morning, and said to them—he had a way of talking to dumb beasts as if they could understand : “ I don't see why you should stop laying eggs just at this time, when we want them more than ever.”

As he spoke he heard a rustling in the straw, and saw two pink eyes looking at him. Then two long ears were cocked at

him, and a rabbit hopped boldly out and laughed at him. Yes, actually laughed at him. The hens did not seem to fear this unusual intruder in the least. In fact, the oldest of all went over to him, and turning her head to one side, said something in hen language. And the rabbit answered in Welsh, which is the language of most rabbits in this country.

Austin thought that there was more in this than met his eye or his ear, and he went out of the hen-house and waited outside for a half hour, for he had the patience of an Indian. At the end of that time he heard a hen cackling, and knew that she had laid an egg.

"Ah, ha, they've begun at last," said he, and as he said it out comes Mr. Cottontail with an egg in his mouth, and hops off across the meadow to the strip of woods that bounded it on the west.

"That's where they're going, is it? The

## THE RABBITS' EASTER EGGS

hens are supplying the rabbits with eggs, although papa, and not the rabbits, is feeding them."

He was about to go into the hen-house when he saw two other rabbits come out of the woods and hop along the runway until they came to the hen-house, which they entered at the hens' exit, a small hole cut in the west end.

Austin stood still to wait further developments. He noticed that each rabbit bore in his lips a mouthful of grass, and it struck him that he had wronged them; that they were paying for their eggs in grass.

I suppose that the hens thought that the grass that grew in the woods was richer than that which grew in their yard. People, and animals, too, always prize a thing that comes from afar more than they do something that they can pick up close at hand. That paper-cutter that your aunt

brought from Switzerland does not cut the pages half as well as the back of the fruit-knife does, and yet you value it more.

The rabbits presumably paid cash—or grass—and in a few minutes Austin heard two hens cackle, and he knew that two more eggs had been laid. But before he could enter the house the two bunnies hopped off, one with a white Brown Leghorn egg, and the other with a brown White Plymouth Rock egg. Just then he saw his two sisters crossing the orchard. “Come here,” he said, “and don’t make any noise. Funniest thing that ever happened.”

The girls came tiptoeing over to him with the exaggerated steps that are always thought necessary when quiet is the word, and as soon as they were come to him he said :

“I’ve found out why we haven’t any

## THE RABBITS' EASTER EGGS

eggs. The rab—shh! Here come some more.”

He pointed as he spoke, and his sister saw four rabbits hopping in Indian file from the woods to the hen-house. They did not seem to see the children, or maybe they knew that they had no violence to fear at their hands, for they disappeared in the hen-house. Then ensued another wait, during which time Austin told the girls what had happened.

Now came a chorus of cackling, in which they could distinguish four parts with a solo every now and then. The four parts were taken by a Silver Wyandotte, a Buff Cochin, a White Leghorn, and a Black Spanish, and the solo was sung by a Light Brahma rooster, and right well and lustily he sang it.

“Aren’t you going to get them?” asked Marian.

“Not this time. Wait,” said Austin;

and as he was several years older than his sisters, they waited. A moment later out hopped the four rabbits with four eggs of different sizes and colors, but all equally good for Easter decorating.

"Don't they look dear?" said Sarah, clasping her hands unconsciously and looking "dear" herself.

"What do you suppose they'll do with them—eat them?" asked Marian.

"Oh, no," said Austin, with a little tincture of big brotherism. "They'll paint pictures on them."

The girls giggled at this, and Sarah said:

"But, Austin, I suppose they've been taking them ever since the eggs fell off."

"Fell off what?" asked Austin, teasingly.

"Oh, you know what I mean. I think that you ought to stop them from getting any more. I think the hens will stop



## THE RABBITS' EASTER EGGS

them by not laying any more. That's seven already this morning, and there are only twenty hens."

"Well, they must be getting lazy, then," said Marian, "if seven eggs is all they feel able to lay so near Easter."

"Look," said Sarah, pointing toward the woods, "here come eight rabbits, and they all have roots in their mouths."

"They are certainly buying those eggs," said Austin. "I'm not going to stop them. Say, I have some money in my bank, and I'll go down town and buy some case eggs this evening. They'll do just as well to decorate. And I won't disturb the rabbits at all. Although, I guess this crowd will be fooled—they won't get any eight eggs this morning."

"Isn't it a coincidence," said Marian, "that rabbits should be getting eggs just at Easter time?"

Before anyone could answer there arose

## THE RABBITS' EASTER EGGS

a most cheerful din inside—the din that announces the laying of eggs.

“I guess they are laying twice,” said Sarah.

“No, hens never lay twice in a day,” said Marian. It was not very long since she had learned it.

Here the eight rabbits hopped out of the house and bore away eight nice fresh eggs.

“Well, that’s fifteen. Now they’ve all laid except five,” said Austin. “I wonder if any more will come. I believe that each rabbit has been a different one.”

“Of course. They couldn’t all be the same,” answered Marian with a gay little laugh.

“Rabbits can count! Here come five more,” cried Sarah. And, sure enough, five big rabbits came hopping along and entered the hen-house.

“Wait a minute,” said Austin, and he ran into the house. He came out in a

## THE RABBITS' EASTER EGGS

moment. "The five big Black Langshans are on their nests, and a rabbit is sitting in front of each box."

Austin had barely announced this when deep cackles from the Langshans told the children that the eggs were ready for delivery.

Out and off hopped the five rabbits with five enormous eggs, and every hen had laid. After that, although the rooster did a good deal of talking and seemed to be congratulating the ladies of his household on their remarkable record, the hens became silent and devoted themselves to eating the grass and picking at insects on the roots which had been left by the rabbits.

"Well, if I hadn't seen that, I never would have believed it," said Marian.

"It only shows," said Sarah, "that animals are more intelligent than we think them."

## THE RABBITS' EASTER EGGS

"But it doesn't give us the big day's supply of eggs for decorating," said Austin, ruefully.

They all went into the house to tell their mother. And the rabbits busied themselves in a way that would have keenly interested the children if they could have seen them.

As I have indicated, the McKenzies were kind to dumb animals, and this rather unusual proceeding on the part of the rabbits and the hens was part of a programme that the rabbits originally suggested and the butterflies and hens had eagerly seconded. If you could have been near the rabbit-warrens just a week previous, you would have heard one of a cloud of butterflies of every possible hue saying to a rabbit:

"We'll gladly do it, if there is a rainbow before Easter; but you can't expect us to give up the color on our wings, as

## THE RABBITS' EASTER EGGS

that is our only beauty. But if there is a rainbow, we'll help you gladly, as we can then get all the color we want; and those children are certainly worth pleasing, because they never chase us."

What it meant it would have puzzled me to explain at that time, but the rabbit evidently understood, and rising upon his hind legs, he sniffed the air and looked at the clouds in a weather-wise way.

But, although it was April and there were plenty of showers, there were no rainbows up to the time that all the eggs had been gathered by the rabbits, and old Mr. Cottontail, who had managed affairs so far, said to his wife:

"I'm afraid we can't do it after all. Tomorrow will be Easter."

Along about five o'clock Saturday afternoon there came up a heavy shower just as Austin was about saddling Cæsar to ride to town, and he was disappointed enough

when his mother said that he could not go. However, he was a boy who could bear disappointment manfully; and so, instead of pouting, he went up to his room, and getting out a lot of cards, he began to paint little Easter pictures, to give to the different members of the family at breakfast next morning.

But Marian and Sarah did not take it quite as well.

"I think the rain is just horrid, and so are the rabbits," said Sarah.

"Our whole Easter will be spoiled," said Marian.

"Say, girls," called Austin from his room, "look at that rainbow. And the rain is stopping. I can go, I guess."

The girls looked, and saw the largest and most vivid rainbow that had ever arched itself in the heavens. And while they watched the glorious colors, two clouds of butterflies, whose hues rivaled

## THE RABBITS' EASTER EGGS

those of the rainbow, flew from its two bases, and following its arch, met at the top, and then flew from it to the western woods and disappeared in its shadows.

Austin burst into the room. "I say, girls, did you see that?"

"Yes. Wasn't it queer?" said Marian.

"Wasn't it lovely?" said Sarah. "How could we see them so far? They seemed to brush the rainbow with their wings."

"Well, we've seen enough strange and pretty things to-day to reconcile us to the loss of the Easter eggs," continued Sarah, as her eyes watched the rapidly fading rainbow.

"Especially, as we've gotten along without them every Easter so far," added Marian.

"Well, we won't have to this time," said Austin. "I know mamma will let me go down, now that it has stopped raining."

And in a few minutes he was off on old Cæsar, and the girls flew to their mother to see if she could help them make some dyes for coloring some of the eggs.

But, although Mrs. McKenzie was generally a mine of suggestions to her children when they were in a quandary, she had never done any dyeing, and did not know how to go to work to get a single color except by using blueing, and the girls did not think that would make a very pretty shade of blue. They set the table for their mother, and then they put on their rubbers and went out to get some early wild flowers, and while they were in the field they saw Austin returning—eggless.

“It’s no use,” he called to them. “The fates are against us. They were all out of eggs at both stores. Expected some more this evening, but I couldn’t wait. We’ll have to get along without.”

I am inclined to think that there was a



tear in Sarah's eye, and another one was all ready to roll out of Marian's eye ; but Marian threw her head up, and Sarah threw her head up, the tears rolled back, and the girls went on picking early wild flowers like sensible children.

\* \* \* \* \*

While the family sat at breakfast Easter morning admiring the pretty conceits that Austin's brush had created on cardboard, Mr. Austin noticed a neighbor staring intently at their front doorway.

"Do you suppose the house is afire, Margaret?" said he, calling Mrs. Austin's attention to the man, whose mouth and eyes were wide open.

All five jumped to their feet and ran to the front door, which Mr. Austin opened.

There on the front steps and extending down the path to the gate, sat one hundred rabbits, and each rabbit held an egg in his

paws as a squirrel holds a nut. But such eggs!

The butterflies had, indeed, been to the rainbow, and had borrowed colors from it; but how in the world they ever decorated those eggs with the dazzling hues I cannot tell. Such transcendently beautiful eggs you or I never saw at Easter nor at any other time.

Austin was the first to command his tongue.

"Are these for us?" said he to Mr. Cottontail, who was spokesman.

The rabbit bowed his head solemnly, and the ninety-nine other rabbits bowed their heads too, and then each one in turn went up and handed an egg to one or another of the children.

"Quick, get the clothes basket!" said Mrs. McKenzie to her husband, and in truth they needed it, for a hundred eggs take a good deal of room.

## THE RABBITS' EASTER EGGS

When the last rabbit had handed in his egg, they formed a long line and bowed respectfully to the McKenzies. Then each rabbit put a little paw on his heart, and they faced about, and hopped off around the house and away to the woods, followed by admiring and amused ejaculations from the McKenzies and the neighbor who had joined them. As the rabbits passed the hen-house the rooster crowed, and all the hens said one thing or another—in their own language.

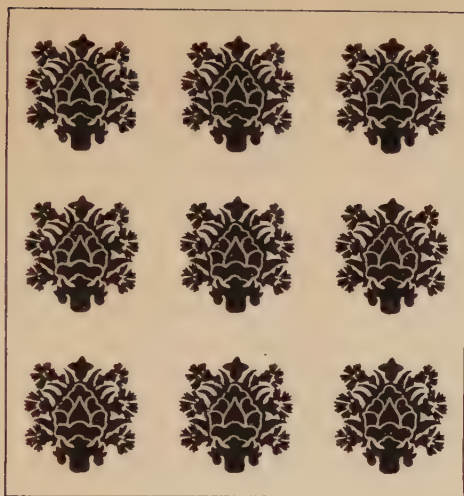
But those eggs! If you can imagine Jack Frost's finest work done in seven colors on the ovals, you will have a faint conception of their beauty.

But what appealed more than anything to tender-hearted Sarah was the fact that the rabbits had thought enough of their human friends to prepare such a gorgeous Easter surprise for them.



THE TALE OF THE  
GOLDEN EGG





**A**LL the boys in Oakville had hen fever. I once heard a little boy say, "Hen fever is something like chicken pox and something like scarlet fever, but it lasts longer than either," and I guess he was right. But if you who are reading this are so unfortunate as to be a city boy and only know hens as the featherless things they hang up by their legs in the poultry stores, I can tell you that hen fever is very delightful while it

lasts, for it means the enthusiastic care of hens—which are the birds that lay the eggs of commerce. It means feeding them the right food and rejoicing in their cackling, which is their way of saying, “Watch me lay an egg;” and it means hunts for hidden nests with maybe a dozen eggs in them, and, it may be, a dozen fluffy little chickens. It means the right food and plenty of water for them, and tucking them into bed at night so they won’t catch cold ; and it sometimes means enough pocket money from the sale of eggs and chickens to buy a handsome double-ripper with a picture of Dewey winning out at Manila.

So you see that hen fever doesn’t require the services of a physician ; and you can catch it at any time of the year, although March and April are the easiest months in which to get it, for then any old hen at all will lay eggs, and you think she’s going to do it all the year round, and you



## THE TALE OF THE GOLDEN EGG

get your father to buy forty of them, and the first thing you know your hens are all on strike and you're buying your eggs at a grocery store. And that sometimes cures hen fever. But it also shows you that you didn't have the right brand of fever or they would have kept on laying.

The annual Bangtown fair was billed to come off the first Tuesday in October, and ten of the Oakville boys had entered their hens in the hope of winning prizes. Abbott Lyman was going to send ten black Leghorns, and Philip Wendell was going to ship a crate of white Plymouth Rocks, and Beecher Ward was going to exhibit three black Spanish hens.

But poor little Bryant Williams felt quite left out because he had nothing to send. He was a little orphan who would have had hen fever in a minute if he could have bought or borrowed any hens, but it was all he could do to get enough clothes

## THE TALE OF THE GOLDEN EGG

to cover him and sufficient food to keep his internal machinery going, and to buy even one scrub hen would have overtaxed his resources.

I'm rather afraid that Abbott Lyman crowed a little over Bryant. Maybe he had caught it from his hens, and maybe not; but wherever he had caught it, he should have dropped it instanter. He said, in that taunting way of his that made him so unpopular with smaller boys and got him into so many scrapes with bigger ones, "If I was so poor that I couldn't enter any fowls at the fair, I'd go jump into the Naugatuck."

But little Bryant, instead of making an ugly reply, simply turned a handspring and went down the road to help Beecher Ward knock a crate together for his Pekin ducks.

On the way to Beecher's house he came upon an old woman who had slipped on a

slide and fallen. She had dancing black eyes and a sugar-loaf hat and long straight hair, and her nose was within hailing distance of her chin, and she looked a good deal like old Mother Hubbard or Mother Goose or one of the other mothers of nursery tales.

Bryant was a helpful chap, and instead of laughing at the old woman, as Abbott would have done, he stopped and said: "Have you hurt yourself? Can I help you?"

"Indeed you can, sonny. I think I've cracked my hip. I didn't see the ice, and the first thing I did see was stars."

Bryant laughed. Here was an old woman who could make a joke of her trouble, and he was the better pleased to help her, for he was always joking himself. He put his arm around her, and finding her a bag of bones, he lifted her with no trouble at all.

“Indeed, but you’re a good lad. Once I’m on my feet I’m good for all day, but when I tumble—which I don’t often do—I’m as badly off as a turtle on its back.”

“Are you going far?” said Bryant. “Can’t I carry your basket?”

“Thank you kindly if you will,” said the old woman. “My hip pains me a good deal. I suppose you’ll be going to the Bangtown fair and exhibiting some chickens, like the other boys.”

“No, indeed,” said Bryant, ruefully. “I have just enough money to get in myself, and I made that helping Beecher Ward take care of his ducks. I wish I could enter some hens, for I love them, and would like to win a prize.”

“Well, it’s a lucky thing that you met me and that I fell, for in my basket I have the hen that laid the golden egg and I will let you have her all day tomorrow, if you will promise to return her

## THE TALE OF THE GOLDEN EGG

to me next day. I live on Black Mountain."

And then Bryant knew who it was that he had befriended—none other than the witch woman of Watertown, who in winter lived in Watertown, but in summer lived in a charcoal-burner's abandoned hut on the Mountain.

"You can win a prize with the hen, and you can sell the golden egg which she will lay at ten in the morning, for a great deal of money, and you can show her in a tent and charge so much admission."

Did ever a boy find fortune knocking so many times on his door at once? His eyes filled with tears, and he grasped the old woman's hand and thanked her with all the fervor of a warm nature.

"I must go and see about getting a tent at once," said Bryant.

"Now I like that," said the old witch. "Some boys would have expected me to

furnish tent and all myself, but I see that you are willing to help yourself. Go to Lowell Russell, and tell him I sent you, and he will fix you out. Here, take the hen along; but be sure that no one steals her, or she and the thief will disappear entirely."

Bryant promised, and ran off with the basket. While he was waiting for Mrs. Russell to open the door, he lifted the cover of the basket and looked in. There sat a quiet-looking hen of a bright golden color. Her comb was as red as blood, and she looked exactly as if laying golden eggs was a good thing for her health, which it undoubtedly was, for think how many years it is since she was first discovered!

Bryant told his errand to Mrs. Russell, and she told him that her husband, who was vice-president of the Bangtown Fair Association, had a tent that was to have

## THE TALE OF THE GOLDEN EGG

been used by a man with a five-headed calf, but the calf had lost four of its heads in a railroad accident and was now no better than any calf, so the man didn't need the tent. And then Mr. Russell came in, and proved to be kindness itself.

Next morning the fair opened, and it was like all the country fairs that were ever held. And if you never attended one, I can tell you that the chief thing to be seen there is the people—people who have come afoot and on horseback, on wheels and between wheels, and some who would have come in balloons rather than miss coming. There is one big tent and a lot of smaller ones, and there are men who sell candy and oysters and soda and whips. The whip-men are really worth while. They sell half a dozen whips, each one worth a dollar, and charge a dollar for the lot and still make money. Now that ought to make a good problem

## THE TALE OF THE GOLDEN EGG

in arithmetic. If one whip is worth one dollar, and a man sells six such whips for a dollar and makes money on the sale, how much does he make? Do it in long division. Or maybe fractions would be better. But I'm sure I don't know how the man does it.

The poultry show was a fine one; not only all the boys, but the farmers, for miles around had entered birds. But Bryant took first prize as a matter of course. A hen that lays golden eggs is worth any number of hens with silver feathers.

Bryant was kept busy taking in the nickels that the people paid to go in and see the hen, in a parrot cage loaned by Mrs. Ward. Mr. Russell had painted a beautiful picture of a hen at least two feet high and with two high feet, and the tent was naturally a magnet of attraction.

Of course the biggest crowd was in the tent at ten o'clock, when the hen was ad-



## THE TALE OF THE GOLDEN EGG

vertised to lay the egg. The tent had been full before that, but there's always room for more people in a crowd. Those people who happened to be in the tent when the egg was laid had something to talk about for the rest of their lives, and I dare say, if you go up to Oakville, you'll find persons who saw the whole proceeding.

At ten sharp the egg appeared, and the hen began to cackle a silvery lay. Mr. Russell, who stood by Bryant to see fair play, held the egg up, and told the crowd that it was probably worth \$300 and any farmer could have it for that price spot cash. While the crowd was laughing at this, for people up Oakville way don't carry many three-hundred-dollar bills around loose in their clothes, a queer thing happened.

One of the men who ran a wheel of fortune—the kind where you pay ten cents

## THE TALE OF THE GOLDEN EGG

and are sure to get an article worth a tenth of a cent—no blanks—thought that a hen that laid golden eggs laid over any fortune wheel in the country ; so he told his pal that he was going to steal the hen.

He was standing on the other side of the hen, and while the crowd was intent on the glistening egg, he seized the enchanted fowl and burst through the crowd and out of the tent as quick as winking. The farmers followed him, crying, "Stop, thief!" but they had not run ten feet when a remarkable thing happened.

That man and the hen disappeared as if they had been swallowed up. There was no place where the man could have hidden. He had simply vanished because he stole the hen.

And neither the hen nor the man has been seen from that day to this, although it was away back in October. The old witch's prediction had come true. I dare say that

## THE TALE OF THE GOLDEN EGG

she has the hen ; but who has the man, I don't know. And I don't care much.

As for Bryant, he sold the egg to a banker in Waterbury for \$400, and put the money in the savings bank ; and he bought some blooded Wyandotte hens with the gate-money he took in, and now he has one of the best poultry farms in the whole state of Connecticut.



THE BOY WHO REQUIRED  
WINDING





**Y**OU boys who are wound up to run through a whole lifetime, and whose machinery so seldom gets out of order—that is, if you are out of doors a good deal, and don't spend your time reading improbable tales—ought to be able to appreciate the sad case of Jimmy Whortleberry of Winchester, Massachusetts.

Jimmy looked and acted and felt like other boys, with one exception. He had

to be wound up like a clock every day. Just at the back of his neck there was a little keyhole, and he was wound up with a silver key that fitted into it.

It's no use for you to ask me to explain why, or how, or anything else. Some things have to be taken on trust. If you don't believe this story, the first thing I'll hear is that you haven't believed the others, and then what would become of my confidence in myself?

Jimmy had a very remarkable mother. She was always thinking of Jimmy's comfort and Jimmy's pleasure, and she was so kind to him that he actually loved her.

Now a great many mothers have to do a good deal for their boys. They have to remember where the cap was thrown when the boy came home from his play; they have to know where he left his skates and what became of his top; but I



never knew of any other mother who had to remember to wind her son up every morning before breakfast. You see the keyhole being in the back of his neck, Jimmy couldn't reach it himself. But his mother was only too glad to keep the boy going, for he was such a cheery little lad; up to mischief and dreadfully naughty sometimes, but well worth winding up for all that.

It was the funniest performance, his winding-up. I was there on a visit once, and I saw Mrs. Whortleberry wind him. She put the pretty silver key into his neck and began to turn it, and the blood ran through his veins with a sweet crinkling noise that sounded like music-boxes miles and miles away. Jimmy always liked to be wound up. It was like taking a tonic. He would run and jump and sing gaily and act for all the world as if he had been charged with electricity.

## THE BOY WHO REQUIRED WINDING

Not half the boys in Winchester who played with Jimmy knew that he had to be wound up, for he was just as natural as any boy, and could climb and skate and wrestle with the best of them.

One day the boys got up a walking race. In this they were aided and abetted by old Mr. Dixon. They were to walk from Winchester to Arlington Center and back again for a silver medal that Mr. Dixon had promised to the winner. Old Mr. Dixon is a silver-haired gentleman whom all the boys like because he is still a good deal of a boy himself, in spite of his seventy years.

"I think that Jimmy will win if he doesn't run down," said Mr. Whortleberry.

"Run down indeed," said Mr. Dixon, hotly. "Jimmy won't run down when he knows it is a walking match. He'll win fair, you may depend upon it." From

## THE BOY WHO REQUIRED WINDING

which it will be seen that Jimmy was a favorite with the old man.

The race was to be walked on a Saturday. It so happened that, the night before, Mrs. Whortleberry was taken ill with an attack of grip, and in the morning she was too sick to rise.

She told the maid to wind Jimmy, but the maid was a rather feather-brained creature and forgot all about it, and as for Jimmy, he was so full of the race that he never noticed that he had not been wound. Of course, just as it is with clocks, he could run several hours overtime. So he was able to go down to breakfast, and then run in and kiss his mother good-bye, and tell her that he was sorry that she was too sick to come and see the start.

Just as he was leaving the room she called out, "Are you wound up, Jimmy?" But he was half way downstairs by that time, and didn't hear her. He put on

his cap, and started off at a dog trot for Mr. Dixon's house, for that was to be the meeting-place for the contestants.

There were Chelsea Concord and Dorchester Medford and Elgin Waltham and Somerville Newton and his brother, Center Newton.

Old Mr. Dixon was in tip-top spirits, and gave each of the boys an orange. The start was to be made from the Winchester library, and the course was to be along the line of the trolley road to Arlington, turning at the railroad station and coming back over the same route.

Jimmy felt unusually buoyant. He bounded around until Mr. Dixon said :

“ Boy, if you'll save some of that energy for the race, I haven't a doubt but you'll win the medal.”

Elgin Waltham knew that Jimmy had to be wound up, and he said : “ Did they wind you extra tight, Jimmy ? ”

Jimmy's face went white as it struck him that he had not been wound at all ; but boylike, he thought he'd probably get through all right, so he said nothing. But he stopped jumping, and said: " Let's hurry up and get to the library."

There was quite a crowd of Winchester people at the library, for the local paper had contained a notice of the coming race, and as it was Saturday nobody in town had anything to do. That is, nobody who counts for anything. I believe some of the grown-ups did have some work to attend to ; but, after all, what are grown-ups ? Only children who have outlived their usefulness. You'll have great times when you grow up, and some of you won't regret that you are no longer children ; but I tell you that when a fellow is a boy, everything is fresh and new, and he doesn't know it all, even if he sometimes thinks he does. When he grows up he

doesn't know it all either, but he certainly does know that he was awfully lucky to have had a boyhood, and the more he keeps his memory on it the better time he will have right up to the end of the chapter.

At ten o'clock old Mr. Dixon started them off. It was to be a square heel and toe walk, and for a block they kept pretty close together. Then Jimmy and Elgin began to walk away from the others, and it began to look as if it were going to lie between them. But it's a long way to Arlington, and some of the boys were reserving their force for the end of the contest; so there was hope even for plodding Dorchester Medford, who at the end of the first mile was two blocks in the rear of the procession.

Mr. Dixon had hired a wagon, and he rode along cheering the boys and urging them to do their best.

## THE BOY WHO REQUIRED WINDING

"Say, this is going to be dead easy," said Jimmy. "It lies between me and you, and I bet I'll win." He and Elgin were neck and neck.

"You'll have to take an electric to do it, then," said Elgin, with spirit. "Anyhow, a boy that's wound up ought to go faster than a plain every-day boy. I don't think it was fair to let you in."

Again Jimmy's heart sank. What if he should run down? He felt all right; but he knew that, when he stopped, he'd stop all at once and without any warning.

"Don't talk, walk," said he shortly, and pegged away, his lithe little legs swinging back and forth with the regularity of piston rods.

When they reached Arlington, Medford had crept up to fourth place, and Somerville Newton was neck and neck with Elgin; but Jimmy had gained the lead, and was steadily increasing it.

## THE BOY WHO REQUIRED WINDING

Across the tracks they went and around the station and back across the tracks, old Mr. Dixon cheering lustily and growing almost apoplectic with his exertions.

“It’s Jimmy’s race,” he shouted, and any one could tell that he was glad. Well, Jimmy was a general favorite, and next to winning it himself, I guess every boy would rather have seen Jimmy win it than any one else.

The pace began to tell on them all on the way back ; but they were game lads, and while the old gentleman rode along as pacemaker, they would not have given up if the way had been ten times as long. They were all Massachusetts boys, and there are no boys to beat those unless it is the boys of the rest of the United States.

They were within a quarter of a mile of the home stretch when Jimmy began to slacken his pace. This encouraged Med-



ford, who had been gradually working his way up in the procession, and he passed Somerville, who had long ago distanced Elgin, and steadily advanced until he was within a rod of Jimmy. It had been a remarkably close race, and no one had dropped out.

You should have seen Mr. Dixon's face when he saw his favorite losing ground. As for Elgin, he was so encouraged that he broke into a run and, of course, lost his chance of winning.

For one brief moment Jimmy thought that he had run down; but when he realized that he couldn't move a step after the machinery had stopped, he gave a spurt and increased his lead by three feet. There was now just an eighth of a mile left, and the race looked to be Jimmy's, for Medford was walking his prettiest and couldn't gain an inch on the leader.

The beautiful building of the Winches-

ter library is now in sight. A crowd of Winchester's best citizens are standing there, waving flags and cheering. Jimmy's father is among the number. Jimmy sees him, and wishes that his mother might be there, too.

Five hundred feet more and Jimmy will be champion.

But the mechanism had reached its limit of running. The maid had lost the race for him because she had forgotten to wind him. Down in the road he dropped. His arms moved spasmodically once or twice, his legs kicked a little, and he lay an inert mass on the macadam.

And then Medford did a very noble thing. Disdaining the fact that it was now his race, he dropped out, and stooped to pick Jimmy up, and Somerville Newton walked in over the line and won the medal, amid the perfunctory cheers of the Winchesterians.

A doctor ran up to Jimmy. But Elgin Waltham said, "You're not what he wants; he wants the key."

The doctor thought he was insane; but Elgin started for Jimmy's house to get the key, and ran plump into Mr. Whortleberry.

"The key, the key," he gasped.

Jimmy's father had seen his son fall, and like every other member of the Whortleberry family, he carried a key that would fit the lad's neck. He ran to the boy, and said to the doctor: "I am his father. He only needs winding."

That doctor was the most astonished physician in eastern Massachusetts, but he said nothing. The bystanders saw Mr. Whortleberry insert the key, and then they heard a faint and musical sound, which, as I have said, was Jimmy's blood coursing through his veins, and then the boy's legs began to work back and forth

and his arms to pump, and he rose to his feet and went on with the race.

"Jimmy boy," said his father, sadly, "the race is over. It would have been yours if only you had been wound up."

Poor Jimmy realized then what had happened, and being a boy, even if he did have mechanism inside of him instead of vitals, he burst into tears.

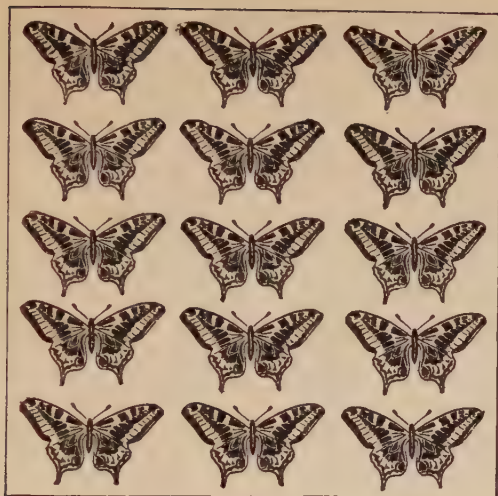
And then occurred a pretty scene.

Somerville Newton went up to Mr. Dixon, who was hastening to shake hands with Jimmy, and said in a loud voice so that all could hear: "I don't think we ought to call this a race. If I'd known Jimmy wasn't wound up, I'd never have entered. Say we have it again next Saturday."

"Hooray," shouted all the boys, including old Mr. Dixon.

THE BOY WHO TURNED  
BOOKS INTO FOOD





**H**IS name was John S. Smith, and he lived in a little village among the Berkshires, near Stockbridge.

I'm not going to tell just where, or you'd all be writing letters to him asking him how he did it, and he hates to answer letters.

John Smith was nine years old on one of his birthdays. He had also been eight and seven and a whole lot of other numbers, but it was when he was nine that he

first discovered his peculiar gift. He was sitting in the kitchen reading, while Kate, the hired girl, was making tomato ketchup. Well, you know how hungry the smell of that good condiment makes a fellow, and John, who had not eaten a mouthful since breakfast—and it was now nearly nine o'clock A. M.—was naturally ravenous. He held his book in his two hands, and said to Kate, “I wish I had something good to eat.” Then he felt something soft in his hands, and lo and behold! his book was a cake. He didn’t stop to think of the consequences, but he just ate it, and it was “lickin’ good,” as his Aunt Penelope would have said. But after he had finished it, he wanted to read again about the man who wanted to shiver; for it was Grimm’s Fairy Tales he had been reading. But he couldn’t do it, for the book was in his little stomach. Kate was astonished to think he could turn it into cake. She



was not much of a reader herself, and she hated baking. "Land sakes!" she said, "if I thought I could get rid of baking by turning your pa's books into bread and cake, I'd never light the oven again."

"I don't suppose you can," said John, "but I guess I can."

"Well, try it," said Kate.

John's father was a minister, and he had two or three hundred theological books in his study. He was not at home that morning, having gone to Pittsfield to attend some convention or other. So John and Kate went into his study, and John said to her, "What do you need?"

"Well," said she, "I was going to bake bread this morning as soon as the ketchup was done. You might make me a large loaf of bread."

"What book'll I take?" asked John.

"Oh, any book. They all look about

alike. He'll never miss it, he has so many."

So John reached up and took down Fox's Book of Martyrs. He held it in one hand, and said: "I wish this was a loaf of bread." And then a remarkable thing happened. Both John and Kate were surprised at it. The book still continued to be a book.

"Why, that's funny," said John. "I thought I had the power." He grabbed it in both hands, and again said, "I wish this was a loaf of bread"; and this time it became a warm, fresh loaf. Kate was delighted. So was John. What boy wouldn't be?

It was such a large loaf that Kate wouldn't need another for three days. They had it for dinner, and Mrs. Smith complained that it was heavy; but what could you expect? You can't make light bread out of heavy materials.

After that, at every "baking," John converted a theological work into bread for the family, which was what his father had been doing for many years, although not so directly. But after a while the Rev. Mr. Smith noticed that his library was growing beautifully less, and as he never loaned his books, he wondered thereat. At last, one Saturday, after completing his sermon, he lay down upon the sofa to take a nap; but he was awakened by hearing light footsteps. Through half-closed lids he saw his son enter the room and take down a copy of "The Growth of Congregationalism in New England" and make a loaf out of it; and as he was a quick-witted man, he realized what had become of his library, and also fathomed the cause of the late heavy bread. He reprimanded John severely until the boy told him that he had only done it to ease Kate's labors, and then the old gentleman

made her cease her labors entirely and retire to her own home for an indefinite rest. So she learned that a loaf has to be paid for sooner or later.

But although John never took any more books to turn into bread, he often amused himself by making pumpkins out of rocks and candy out of twigs; and when the older boys and girls of the village went on an excursion to Bash Bish Falls, they always took the little fellow along, as it saved the bother of putting up lunch. He made lovely chicken sandwiches out of moss.

One day the Rev. Mr. Smith, his wife, and John went down to New York to see the sights, and among the places that they visited was Central Park. John was very much interested in the ancient pottery and the mummies and things that he saw in the Metropolitan Museum. But as most of them were under glass, he did not do any damage, as he might have done if he

had suddenly become hungry and turned an Egyptian mummy into a Welsh rabbit or a Roman coin into a Neapolitan ice. His father was a little nervous, however, and he breathed a sigh of relief when they got out safely.

On the way over to the Monkey House John saw the great obelisk that was brought from Egypt a few years ago and set up in the Park. He said to his father :

“ Oh, papa, that’s older than you or I, or even Aunt Penelope, isn’t it ? ”

“ Yes, my son,” said his father, and then he told him a lot of interesting facts concerning it that I won’t repeat, because this is not a story about ancient times, but about a boy who is still living in Massachusetts.

Finally John walked up to the obelisk.

“ Hands off ! ” said his father nervously ; but either the boy didn’t hear or else he didn’t mind. I prefer to think that

he didn't hear. At any rate, he put his hands on the great stone shaft, and said :

“ My, I wish this was a big pyramid of ice-cream. I'm awful hungry.”

In an instant, of course, the obelisk turned to ice-cream of different flavors, vanilla at the bottom, chocolate in the middle, and strawberry at the top.

Now, if it had been winter time, it wouldn't have been so disastrous a thing, because ice-cream will keep indefinitely in the winter. But it happened to be a warmish day in early spring, and the priceless thing began to melt. John grabbed a handful, and was just going to eat it when a park policeman came running up and said :

“ It's against orders to deface anything in the park, and eating is defacing.”

But that wasn't the worst of it. The hieroglyphics were beginning to run and were changing their meanings already. So Mr. Smith said :

“John, clap your hands on the thing and wish it back to stone, if possible. I can’t afford to pay for this obelisk.”

John ran up and did as he was bid, and wished with all his might that the obelisk would turn to stone again, and by great good luck it did. Then he licked his fingers on the sly, and promised his father then and there that he would never try to exercise his strange gift again.

The Rev. Mr. Smith asked the policeman not to say a word about the affair, and not a word has been said until to-day; but I think it is too good to keep.

And now, when you hear learned men say that the action of our climate is wearing away the stone that stood for ages in Egypt, you will understand that John Smith had a hand in it—in fact, a couple of hands in it. And as his Aunt Penelope would have said, “It was lickin’ good.”





SYDNEY AND THE JAR  
FAIRY





**S**YDNEY PUFFER was the stupid-est boy in the Malburn school. Now some boys are stupid and don't know it: if you were to be led by their opinion of themselves, you would say they were anything but stupid. But Syd knew he was stupid, and wished every day that he could become less so. It is not the custom at the Malburn school for the boys to have any home studies; all their studying is done in the class-room. But

Syd was so anxious to learn that he would take his geography and his speller home, and would study and study, until he fell asleep over the books.

And next day in class Miss Greene would say: "Sydney, spell 'few.'"  
"F-i-e-w," Sydney would say. "Wrong. Spell 'exasperate.'"  
"I-g-s-p-a-r-a-i-t." Sydney would spell slowly and painstakingly, and, then, like as not, Bob Addoms, who had not looked at his lesson, would spell both words as glibly as could be, and poor Sydney would feel utterly disheartened.

Then would come the geography lesson. "Sydney, where is France?"

"France is the capital of England."

"Yes, but where is it?" Miss Greene would continue. She really seemed to take pleasure in leading Sydney on.

"Is it in Ireland?" he would ask doubtfully.

"No, it isn't. What are its chief products?"

"Products" would start Syd off. "Tar, pitch, turpentine, and lumber," he would say with unusual speed; and amid the laughter of the class, he would sit down. And Bob would get up, and bound France, and tell her chief products and something about her form of government; and yet he had only dipped into his geography between classes.

But it was in reading that Sydney fared worst. He could not read the simplest words without stumbling along. Once Miss Greene gave him this verse from Longfellow:

The shades of night were falling fast,  
As through an Alpine village passed  
A youth, who bore, 'mid snow and ice,  
A banner with the strange device,  
Excelsior!

Sydney rose at his desk, held the book

close to his face, for he was near-sighted, opened his eyes wide, and, frightened, dropped his lower lip, and very slowly read :

The shads of nigt were fall-ing fat  
As thog an All Pine villag paced  
A yowt who bore mid snow and ice  
A baner with the strong device, Ex-  
Excellent!

"Very excellent," said Miss Greene ;  
"but I'm afraid not excellent enough for  
you to get an 'extra' in reading."

When Syd sat down, he was in tears ;  
but that did not cause the sniggers and  
smiles of his classmates to subside, nor did  
Miss Greene make any attempt to stop  
the scholars.

Little Syd felt humiliated, and hardly  
knew what happened the rest of the day.  
He was kept in for an hour, and had to  
read that stanza out loud fifty times and  
then write it twenty-five times.

## SYDNEY AND THE JAR FAIRY

It was late in the afternoon when he finally left school and started for home. His way lay along the seashore, and he shuffled through the damp sand, half wishing that a big wave would come and bear him away to a land where there was no such thing as school.

"I wish I could learn. I don't want to grow up a dunce," he said to himself, "but everything is so hard, and Miss Greene doesn't think I can do anything, and then I can't. I read that verse all right to grandma, but she kept stroking my hair, and that made the words look easier."

So he talked out loud to himself, and shuffled along until his foot unearthed, or rather unsanded, a bronze jar of a very curious shape. Little Syd had never read any fairy stories, of course. Reading was too hard a thing for him to do more in it than he had to do. And his grandmother,

although a lovely old lady and devoted to her little grandson (the only one left of a large family of children and grandchildren), was no believer in fairy tales. "It's a waste of time," she had said to a caller who asked her whether she read "Alice in Wonderland" to Sydney. "It all seems very nonsensical to me. What is the use of filling the poor boy's brain with stories that are not only untrue, but are silly? It isn't easy for him to learn; so I believe in reading only those things that will do him good."

"Yes," the visitor had said, "but if you don't exercise his imagination, you are going to give him a cheerless old age."

But grandma had laughed in her cheery way and said: "Well, I'm old enough, conscience knows, and I've had enough to try me, but I find life pleasant, and that without any fairy stories, either."

So the caller had changed the subject.



You see, therefore, that Sydney did not immediately wonder, as an imaginative boy would have wondered, what the jar was good for and whether it was one of the kind told about in the Arabian Nights. But it is a peculiar thing about fairies and their ways that it doesn't make a bit of difference to them whether you believe in them or not. If they think that you need them, they will come to you and force you to believe in them.

As soon as Sydney kicked the jar, he stopped and picked it up, and began rubbing the sand from it, and lo and behold! a beautiful fairy came out of it, and flew before him like a butterfly, talking as she flew.

"What do you want of me, my dear?" she said in the sweetest voice imaginable.

But Sydney only stared in amazement.

"You called me, my dear, and here I am. I can do anything for you that you

wish done. Make you rich, make you wise, make you good."

Now, there are a number of boys in the Malburn school who would have said: "Oh, make me rich," but dear little Syd hardly ever thought of money. He did want to know something, so he said:

"I wish that I could learn easily."

You see, he didn't even ask to know everything without study; he merely wanted to learn easily, and as he had asked so he received.

The fairy fluttered up to him and kissed him on each cheek, and he told me afterward that it was as if a warm snowflake had touched him, which was not a bad idea for a fellow like Sydney.

Then the fairy and the jar vanished, but Sydney walked home as happy as if he had never been bothered at school. He had his school-books under his arm, for he had determined to have good lessons

## SYDNEY AND THE JAR FAIRY

next day if it took him all night to learn them.

I think that he fancied his grandmother would not believe that he had met a fairy, so he said nothing to her about it. But eager to test his new power, he sat down at the center table in the sitting-room and began to study his history lesson. The boys had studies far beyond their ages in that school. Sydney was only ten, and as you have seen, he could hardly read, and yet he had history, geography, spelling, arithmetic, grammar, and physiology.

Well, the history lesson for the next day was about the battle of Concord, and Sydney began to read it out loud, as was his habit, and to his great astonishment he read it as glibly as Bob Addoms, and to his greater astonishment he remembered every word of it, and when he had shut the book up he found himself repeating the whole chapter, word for word, and

with as much expression as Lorimer Halstead put into his reading, and Lorimer was the star "elocutionist" of the school.

Grandma came into the room just as he was finishing his recitation, and she was astonished enough. "Why, my boy, you are improving a great deal. I always said you had it in you. Your dear father was as smart as a steel trap, and I knew you'd inherit some of his smartness. That's an interesting part of history. My grandfather was at the battle of Concord. He was a cousin of Paul Revere's. Do you know about Paul Revere? There are some very pretty verses about him by Longfellow, the poet, in this book. See if you can read them to me."

She handed a volume of Longfellow's poems to the boy, and he read "Paul Revere's Ride" as easily as if he had known it by heart. Not only that, he shut the book up and recited it, with appropriate

gestures; and his grandmother caught him in her arms, and said: "Just like your father. He could recite that so that people always wanted him to repeat it immediately."

You can imagine how pleased Sydney was at this praise from his grandmother, but he did not allow it to turn his little head. He took his other books and studied each lesson, and he found that one reading fixed it in his mind. He was able to do examples in fractions that had merely given him a headache formerly; and as for geography, before bedtime came he had read the whole book through, from beginning to end, and could draw maps and color them, and print the names of cities and counties in most beautiful letters. And as he did each thing his grandmother would say: "Your father all over, my dear."

Some boys would have been eager to

show off next day to the class, but it never entered little Sydney's head. He was very happy that he was going to be like his father—that father who had died when he was a small baby, and he would be glad not to vex Miss Greene any more, but he was not at all anxious to show off. I must say that a little bit of that spirit would have been natural and perhaps commendable, but I am not trying to draw a picture of a boy who might have been, but of a boy who was.

The first lesson after morning exercises was geography. Bob Addoms was asked to go to the board and draw a map of Africa and to name all the Dutch possessions. Addoms was the champion map-drawer of the school, and he knew it, and I suppose that that fact made him careless. At any rate, when his map was done and Miss Greene had said, "Excellent, Bob. I will give you two extras," Sydney raised

his hand and said : " Is it quite right at the Cape of Good Hope ? "

A shout went up from the scholars, and Miss Greene herself smiled. Sydney, who did not know the difference between Europe and South America, to be criticising Bob's map !

" Perhaps you can draw a better one," said Miss Greene. I do not like the sarcastic way in which she talked. Teachers have no business to be sarcastic.

" I'll try," said Sydney, and he went up to her table and selected crayons of different colors.

Then he drew such a map as had never been seen on the black-board. It was as accurate as the map in the geography, even to the smallest inlets and tiniest capes. And when he had drawn it, he colored all the divisions, and printed all the names, amid the dead silence of the class. Just as he finished it the door

opened and the Superintendent of the County Board of Education walked in.

In spite of his coming, the boys and girls clapped their hands at Sydney's work, and Miss Greene said: "Beautiful, Sydney! I'll give you ten extras."

Sydney stood erect, and felt that at last he had come to his own.

And the Superintendent, who was quite a good draughtsman himself, said: "Miss Greene, I consider that map so remarkable that I am going to have the black-board removed and sent to the Paris Exposition as a sample of American school work."

And the scholars rose to their feet and gave three cheers for Sydney, quite unchecked.

Now, if you went to the Paris Exposition perhaps you saw Sydney Puffer's map of Africa. But I don't vouch for its having been there. It was drawn



## SYDNEY AND THE JAR FAIRY

under fairy influence, and it may have been withdrawn under the same influence.

But this I do know. Sydney Puffer is now the best scholar in Malburn school. Miss Greene says it is awakened ambition, his grandmother says it is his heritage from his father, and Sydney says it is the fairy.

*The End*



C02539966

PZ


8

.L87

Y

B2638472

Library  
University of Texas  
at San Antonio



1.25



